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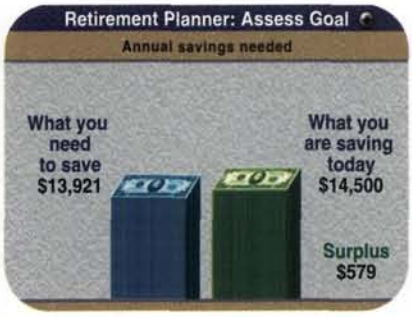

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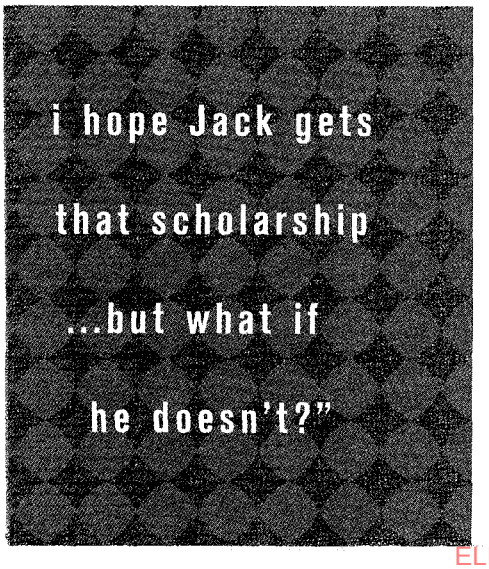

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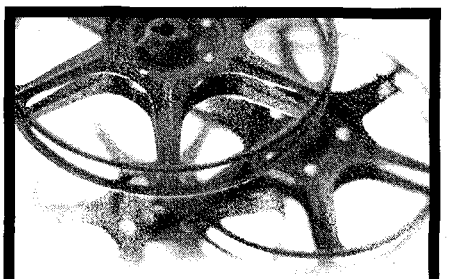

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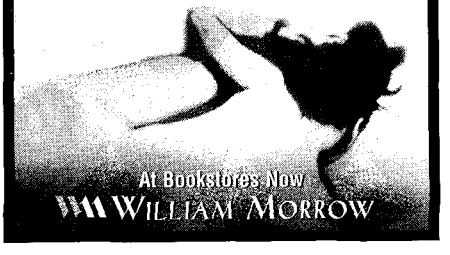

THE NEW YORKER

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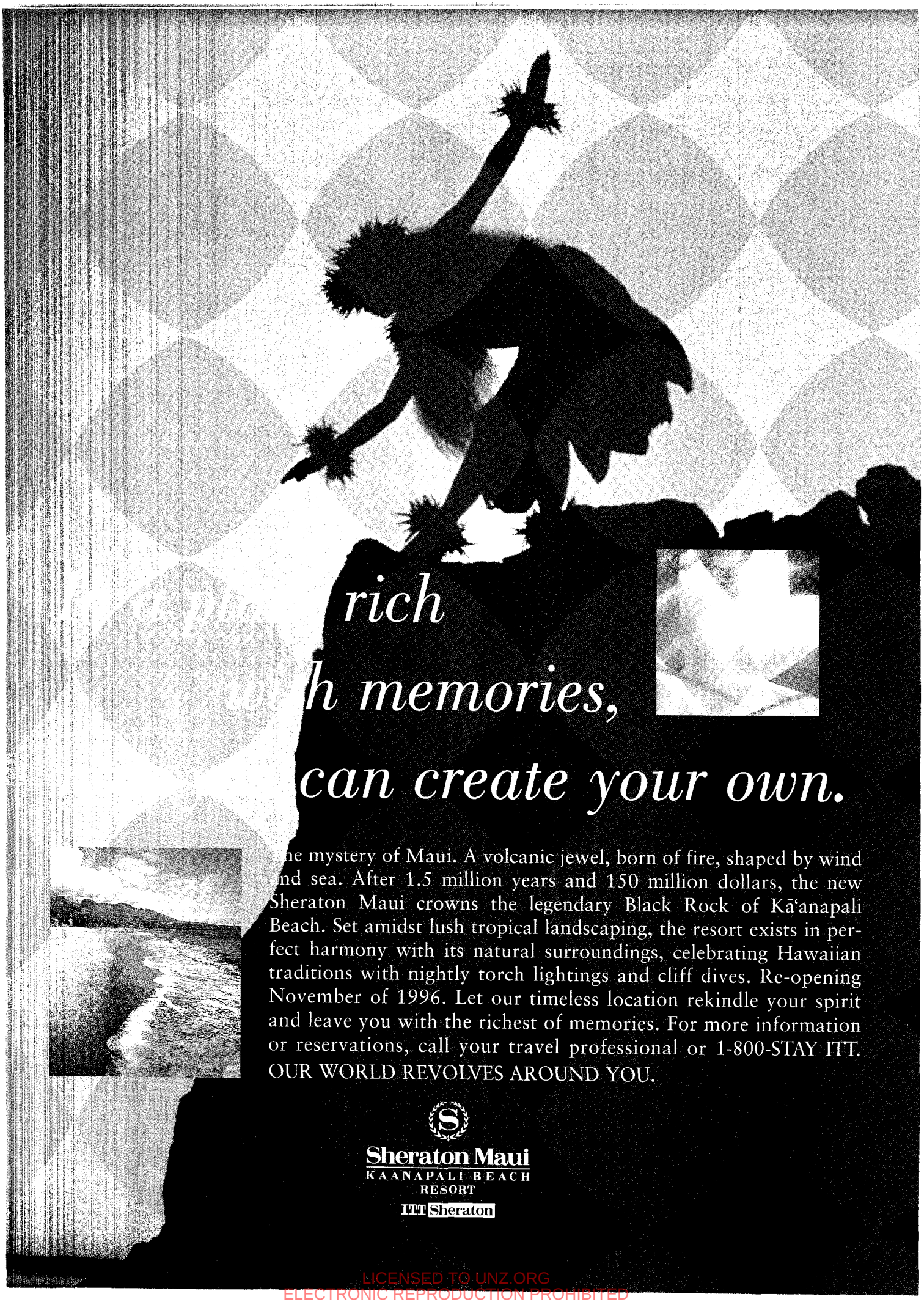

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SNAP ELECTION

Why is the Administration so anxious for Bosnia to vote?

THE NATO-enforced peace in Bosnia is rightly claimed by the Clinton Administration as a foreign-policy triumph. The Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the fighting last November, was the product of vigorous American diplomacy, and the American-led international forces in Bosnia have been spectacularly successful in separating the warring factions. However, there is more to the Dayton agreement—much more—than a simple cessation of hostilities, and NATO's equally spectacular failure to carry out its civilian provisions promises to undermine not only the Administration's claim to a triumph in Bosnia but everyone's hopes for a lasting peace. This failure is a matter not of incompetence on the part of NATO's troops (whenever they have been given clear marching orders in Bosnia, they have performed admirably) but of timidity and cynicism on the part of Western policymakers—who, like the troops, are very much American-led.

Sixty thousand NATO peacekeepers, having easily separated the three hostile armies, have been told to sit on their hands. Why? Because enforcing the civilian provisions of the Dayton agreement—stopping further expulsions, enabling refugees to return to their homes, arresting war-crimes suspects, and opening up political space by insuring freedom of movement, freedom of association, and freedom of the press—would inevitably bring confrontations with the ethnic-nationalist regimes now in place in all three of the Bosnian ministates. Such strife would mar the tranquil picture that the peacekeeper-contributing governments, and especially our own, are naturally intent on maintaining. And it might lead to NATO casualties—a prospect that terrifies our policymakers, on account of its high domestic political cost. "Force protection" has become NATO's watchword and, at this point, its only real mission. If elections of some sort can just be held and a large-scale NATO departure achieved by the end of the year, then maybe, the Administration and its allies hope, all hands can skip home and call it a job well done.

It won't work. As the United Nations and NATO have learned again and again in Bosnia, a successful strategy—and success, in this case, would mean achieving the stated goal of a unified, democratic Bosnia—must be rooted in reality, not in wishfulness and denial. Though elections, for instance, are a wonderful idea in principle, no one contends that the "free and fair" conditions required by the Dayton agreement for elections in Bosnia yet exist. Nevertheless, the

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Clinton Administration is pushing relentlessly for elections in September—ordering its own monitors (in a leaked report) to emphasize "positive" developments (rather than the endless human-rights abuses they actually see) and riding roughshod over allies who might be inclined to point out problems and argue for postponement. The Administration's argument is that waiting for "pristine, ideal" conditions for holding elections could mean waiting forever, and that elections will in any case be a "starting point" for democracy.

They are more likely to be a large step toward the formal partition of Bosnia. In an atmosphere utterly poisoned by unredressed ethnic cleansing, parties representing moderate, non-nationalist policies are unable to compete. Only the three nationalist parties can possibly flourish, and once they are legitimated by an internationally supervised "election" they will be free to move ahead briskly with their fundamentally undemocratic programs. Many Bosnian moderates were driven to despair by the recent decision of an international supervisory group, made under intense American pressure, that elections should indeed be held in September. Without the rule of law, without a minimum threshold of tolerance and compromise, without a free press, elections lose their meaning. Building a stable democracy takes a very long time, and the weak central-state structures (including an ethnically apportioned parliament and a rotating Presidency) mandated by Dayton and supposed to be put in place by the September elections look at this stage less like a starting point, less like a foundation, than like kindling for a conflagration.

Europeans hardly need to be reminded that elections sometimes help bring nasty dictatorships to power: see Germany, 1933, or Poland, 1947. The Clinton Administration is obviously thinking less about old European elections than about an upcoming American one. The trouble is, the logic of allowing the nationalist parties in Bosnia to consolidate their power leads more or less directly, once the peacekeepers leave, to another round of war. Each of the three Bosnian ethnic parties covets the territory that the others now rule; each owes its popularity to a war psychology; and each must keep its economy on a war footing to avoid political responsibility for the immiseration of its own—economically nonviable—statelet.

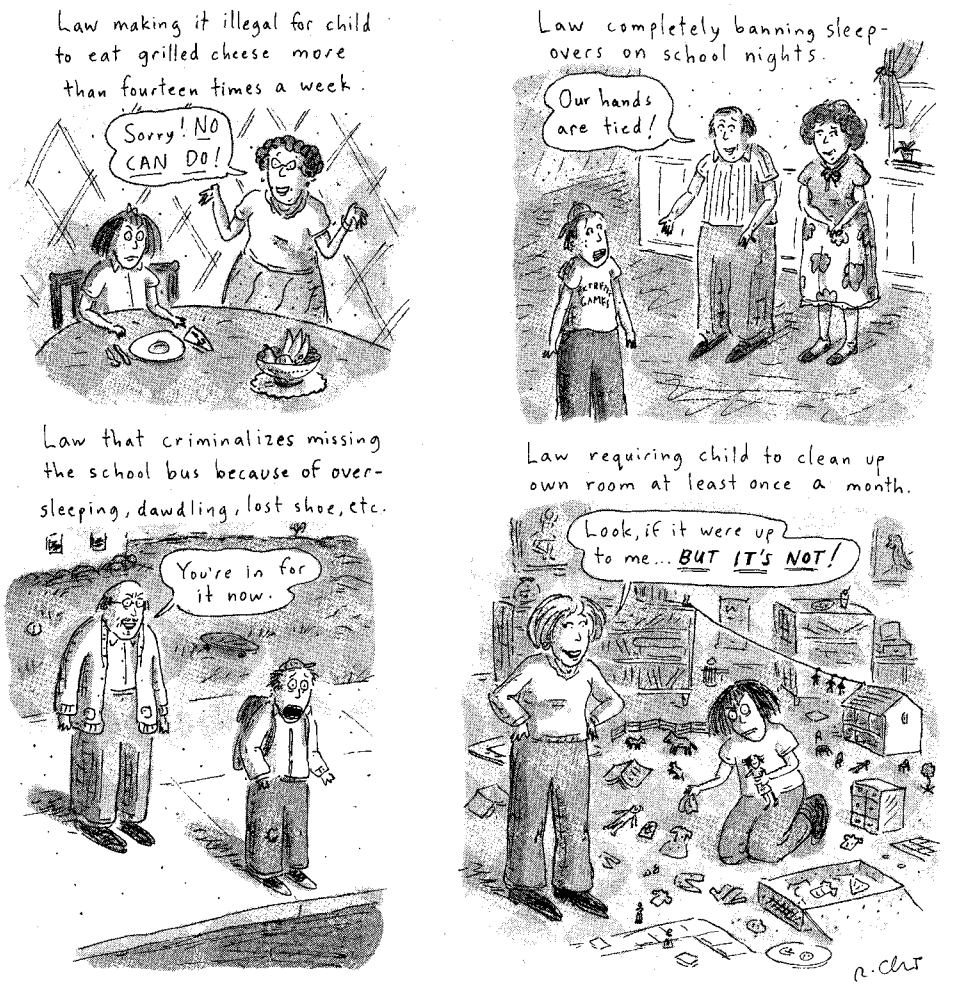
War certainly will not break out this year. But neither will the regimes now in power change their behavior unless the peacekeepers begin to penalize them for their violations of the Dayton accord. Here at home, moreover, the Clinton Adminstration may find the lustre of its triumph in Bosnia fading as major villains like Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic continue to move freely, thumbing their noses at international justice and running their repressive fiefdoms either directly or through proxies. Just last week, Karadzic inflicted yet another humiliation upon NATO: faced with an ultimatum demanding his resignation as President of the Bosnian Serb Republic, he made a show of "temporarily" relinquishing some of his duties to an even more fanatical aide. It was a depressingly familiar two-step, reminiscent of how he called one Western bluff after another during the 1992-95 war.

What, really, would it cost Bill Clinton, to, in effect, order NATO to arrest Karadzic right now? Or to begin seriously enforcing any of the civilian provisions of Dayton? Does anyone in this Administration realize how poorly the extreme passivity of our forces in Bosnia reflects on the President's personal authority as commander in chief? The Dole campaign, one may be sure, realizes it full well.

What if the Administration were to face Bosnian reality and agree to postpone the elections for a few months, during which free and fair campaign conditions might actually begin to come into being? Doing so might hand Bob Dole an issue—particularly if it caused a delay in bringing the troops home. But it might also introduce Americans to a side of Bill Clinton that we have not seen much of: the grown-up statesman, able to make hard, even unpopular decisions based on inconvenient, even tragic facts.

—WILLIAM FINNEGAN

NEXT ON THE AGENDA



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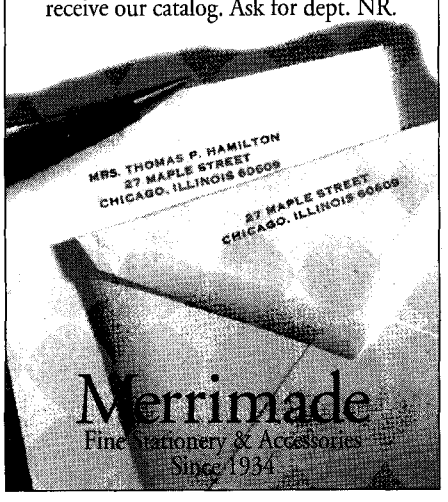

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I proudly farmed for most of my adult life, and was tested by hail, drought, fire, blizzards, tornadoes, and low prices, much like the pioneers in "The Unlamented West," by Jonathan Raban (May 20th). I lost my beloved farm to bankruptcy during the eighties, however, so I have some hard experience to counter Raban's ludicrous attempt to connect the Freemen and the alleged Unabomber to our pioneer past. I would venture to say that most of those people don't even know the rich heritage of the land they occupy. My children and many of my friends toil daily on their farms to produce what this country takes for granted, and they are far too preoccupied with the demands of their careers to squander their time instilling hatred and distrust of the system in their children. Raban's comparison of them to criminals is a disservice: to most folks, rats are still rats even if they have chosen to live among the upright.

THOMAS H. NONEMACHER
Kalispell, Mont.

To reassure the readers of "The Unlamented West," the descendants of Emanuel Falkenstern, who was forced off the land in 1922 by drought, have survived and prospered. The blacksmith shop he started turned into a successful farm-implement business. Some of his children returned to farming and ranching; one became a state legislator, another a university professor. The grandchildren have spread from coast to coast and are largely college educated. To date, we members of the third generation have spawned few traffic violators, let alone Unabombers, though we are cautious about the role of the federal government. Still, in sombre moments I ponder my grandfather's search for a better life. In the late twentieth century in America, I wonder whether or not we have found it.

KATHRYN M. FALKENSTERN
Portland, Ore.

MATTERS OF FAITH

Among the abundance of discontents to be found in Ian Buruma's disdainful review of "The Quest for God: A Personal Pilgrimage," Paul Johnson's recent book (May 20th), is the following: "Johnson believes that moral absolutism is a necessary condition for democracy. The Ayatollah's example shows that the opposite is true." According to Buruma, then, it is clear that democracy cannot countenance moral absolutes. The merest reflection, however, shows this to be pernicious nonsense. For example, "Slavery is wrong" is just one tenet from what is probably an incalculably long list of moral absolutes that are requisite for the proper functioning of a democratic polity. Paul Johnson is unimpeachably (and absolutely) correct.

BOB OAKES
University City, Mo.

The tone of Mr. Buruma's review may be accounted for by his sentiment that "if [Paul Johnson] is right, one is destined to go straight to Hell." Like most secular humanists, Buruma seems to believe that logical arguments carry weight in this critical area of human experience, forgetting William James's comments that encounters with God are transcendent, noetic, and ineffable.

JACK R. ANDERSON
Birmingham, Ala.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.

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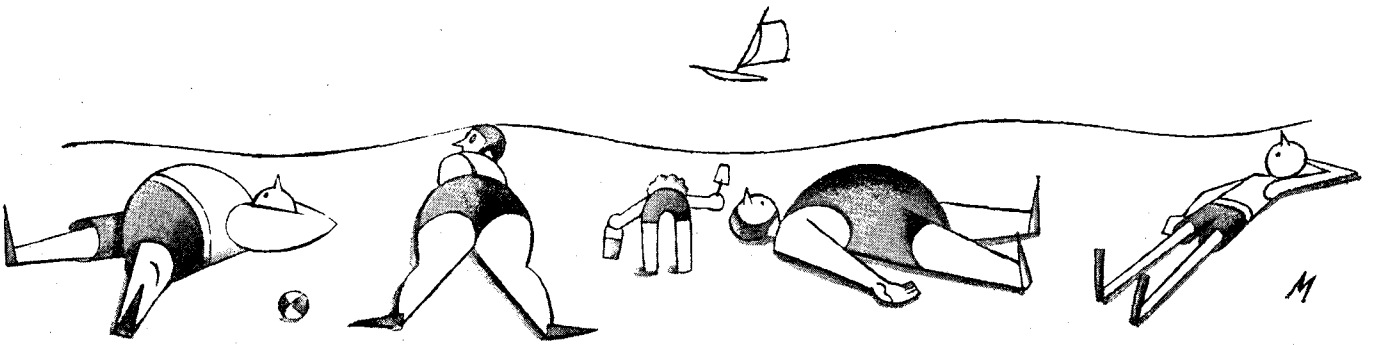

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Acts of Providence—Two one-acts by Edward Allan Baker: "Dead Man's Apartment," a comedy about a man who uses his lunch hour to fight with his mistress, and "Dolores," a drama about two sisters whose lives are affected by domestic violence. Previews begin July 10. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

Aliens in America—Author and performance artist Sandra Tsing Loh's one-woman show, about her German-Chinese childhood in nineteen-seventies California. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Chicago City Limits—The improv company takes aim at the 1996 Presidential campaign with a new revue, "Right to Laugh Party." In previews. (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

I Love You, You're Perfect . . . Now Change!—A revue tracing the ups and downs of courtship, with book and lyrics by Joe DiPietro and music by Jimmy Roberts. Directed by Joel Bishoff. Previews begin July 15. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Phaedra—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company presents Everett Quinton in a one-man Greek tragicomedy, about the princess who fell for her stepson. In previews. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 307-4100.)

"Grandma Sylvia's Funeral," at the SoHo Playhouse.

Da—Brian Murray has the title role in a revival of the Irish playwright Hugh Leonard's semi-autobiographical 1973 drama, about a man vexed by his father's ghost. Directed by Charlotte Moore. Previews begin July 12. (Irish Repertory Theatre, 132 W. 22nd St. 727-2737.)

Grace and Glorie—Estelle Parsons and Lucie Arnaz, in a new play by Tom Ziegler, about an oversolicitous city slicker who has moved to the country and the elderly mountain woman who doesn't want her help. Directed by Gloria Muzio. In previews through July 15. Opens July 16 at 7:30. (Laura Pels, Broadway at 45th St. 719-9393.)

Ice Factory Festival—The SoHo Think Tank's summer shindig opens with an Adobe Theatre production, "Duet! A Romantic Fable," written and performed by Gregory Jackson and Erin Quinn Purcell. July 11-13 at 7. The festival continues through Aug. 17. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 966-4844.)

A Thousand Clowns—The 1962 comedy by Herb Gardner, starring Judd Hirsch, Marin Hinkle, and David Margulies. Scott Ellis is the director. In previews through July 13. Opens July 14 at 7. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Big—This adaptation of the movie that starred Tom Hanks and Elizabeth Perkins provides little joy, though Daniel Jenkins, as the twelve-year-old in a grownup's body, is sweet and likable. The dance numbers are full of grimly talented, grinning kiddies—it's like a midget minstrel show—the score is melodically challenged, and the patronizing book has lost all the movie's charm and poignancy. Directed by Mike Ockrent. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/27/96.) (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Blueprint Series—The Ontological Theatre's annual festival for emerging directors continues through July 14, with plays staged by Elizabeth Stevens, Yosi Wanunu, D. J. Mendel, and Pavol Liska. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. For information and tickets, call 533-4650.)

The Boys in the Band—Its truth games are awfully creaky (and they were when it opened, in 1968—Edward Albee could have practically sued for plagiarism), but it's still hilarious and touching, and though the nine roles are essentially one-note they offer the actors some spectacular opportunities. James Lecesne, as the swishy Emory, and David Greenspan, as the lethal Harold, have a field day. Mart Crowley's study of gay self-hatred no longer seems particularly shocking (except in its viciousness) or politically suspect, but the script holds up soundly in this impressive revival, which was supervised by the playwright and directed with buckets of bile by Kenneth Elliott. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

Bride Stripped Bare—Kate Robin's new drama, about ambitious New York art-world habitués involved in a love triangle. With Leslie Lyles, Rob Campbell, and Susan Floyd. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway, between Broome and Grand Sts. 334-9594. Closes July 13.)

Bring In da Noise, Bring In da Funk—In director George C. Wolfe and dancer-choreographer Savion Glover's heroically energetic musical—which charts the evolution of the African-American beat from its rural Southern beginnings to its Northern urbanization and on to its present hip-hop incarnation—the extraordinary Glover and his sensational group of young tap dancers and street drummers bring joy. They bring fury. They bring history and ecstasy. (5/20/96) (Ambassador, 219 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Charlie!—There's intrigue in the cosmetics industry, in Theatre Couture's musical comedy, starring Sherry Vine, Misstress Formika, and Candis Cayne. With puppetry by Basil Twist. Fridays and Saturdays at 10:30. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202.)

Cowgirls—By the end of this appealing, if somewhat predictable, musical comedy, three chamber musicians have been transformed into fringe-wearin', honky-tonkin' cowgirls. Mary Murfitt, the show's composer and lyricist, is hilarious as an uptight violinist learning how to shake it. Betsy Howie, who wrote the book, is also in the fine cast. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane, east of Sixth Ave., between W. 3rd and Bleecker Sts. 420-8000.)

Curtains—The young director Scott Elliott, who did outstanding ensemble work last year with Mike Leigh's "Ecstasy," has done it again with this coal-black comedy by the English playwright Stephen Bill, set in a drab middle-class living room in Birmingham. The play begins with a birthday party for Ida (Kathleen Claypool), who has just turned eighty-six, and wastes no time in presenting us with the not very pretty realities of old age and the discomfort and ambivalence that the elderly cause in others. The six actors who play the members of Ida's family (among them Jayne Haynes, Laura Esterman, and David Cale) all distinguish themselves with vivid characterizations, and Betty Miller is wonderful as a helpful and extremely annoying neighbor. (6/10/96) (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 339-6200.)

A Delicate Balance—Decorous suburban ennui is transformed into real angst in this bracing, astringent revival of Edward Albee's 1966 play about a family that has sacrificed much of its humanity for the sake of appearances.

BETH ADAMS

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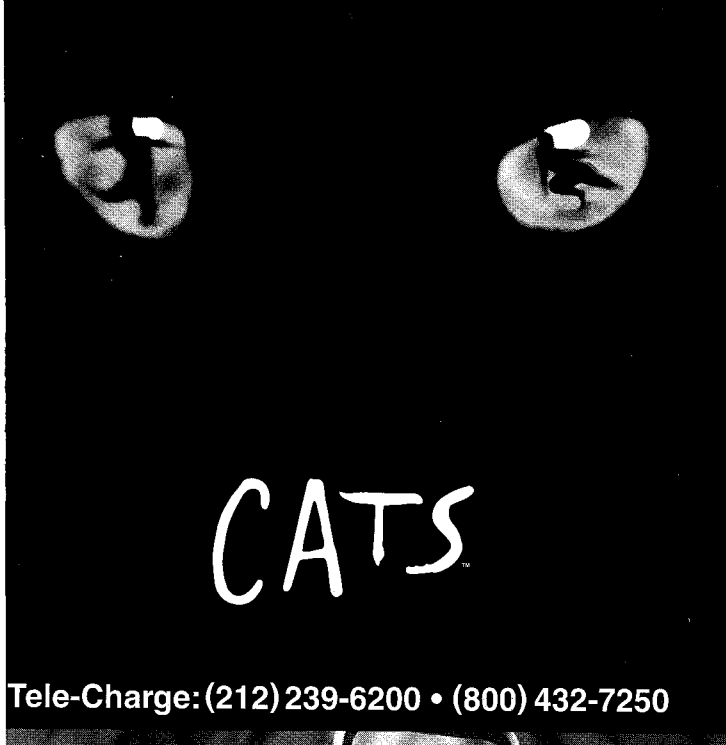

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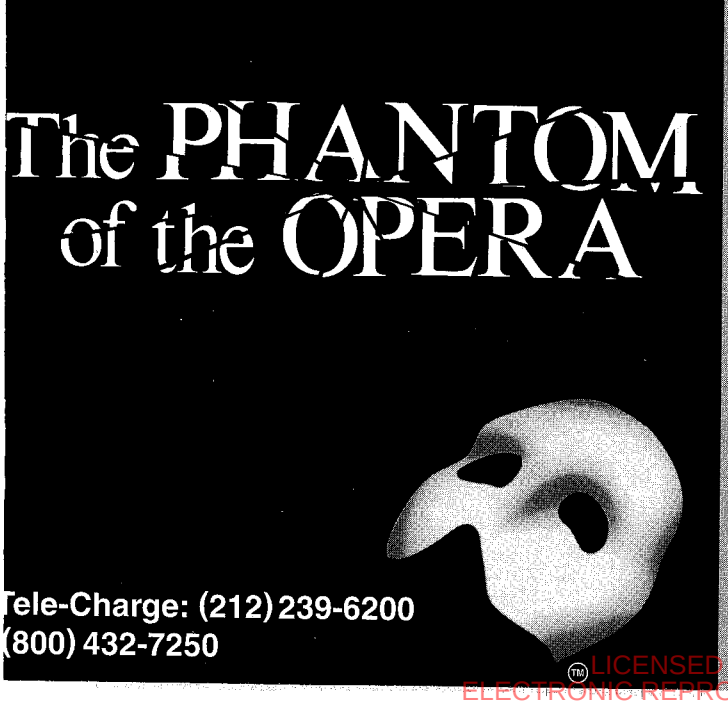

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The cast, under the fine direction of Gerald Gutierrez, is uniformly excellent. (5/27/96) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Forbidden Hollywood—Gerard Alessandrini's hit-and-miss movie-biz sendup. (Triad, 158 W. 72nd St. 799-4599.)

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum—Burt Shevelove, Larry Gelbart, and Stephen Sondheim's 1962 musical-comedy version of a Roman farce is a joke play that begs for outrageousness, but Jerry Zaks's peppy, acrylic revival seldom enters that giddy zone of comic daring. (5/20/96) (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Grandma Sylvia's Funeral—The audience is part of the group of mourners in this comedy by Glenn Wein and Amy Lord Blumsack, which is set in a Jewish mortuary. (SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

Heavenly Days—Zeus, king of the gods, develops an Olympian crush on a college boy vacationing in Mykonos, in John Glines's contemporary version of the Amphitryon myth. (Grove Street Playhouse, 39 Grove St. 924-1198.)

Henry V—In the New York Shakespeare Festival's insufficiently considered production, the gifted actor André Braugher, as the monarch, mistakes largeness of voice and gesture for largeness of meaning and emotion. Only Elizabeth Marvel, as the French princess Katherine, manages to rise above Douglas Hughes's unvarying direction. (Delacorte Theatre, Central Park near W. 81st St. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 539-8750. Closes July 14.)

An Ideal Husband—In Oscar Wilde's hundred-and-one-year-old play, a youthful transgression comes back to threaten the career of a promising Cabinet member. The man who saves the day is played, with showy aplomb, by Martin Shaw. The rest of the delightful, mostly British cast, under the direction of Peter Hall, is well up to the Wildean wit and wisdom, and the evening flies by in a flash of epigrammatic splendor. (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

In My Father's House—A new drama by Samm-Art Williams, in which a black L.A. cop deals with the 1992 riots and their effect on his family. (Billie Holiday, 1368 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-0918. Closes July 28.)

Jasper in Gramercy Park—A comedy about an aging couple who are unusually devoted to their big, domineering dog. (Primary Stages, 354 W. 45th St. 598-5325.)

The King and I—In a word, magnificent. Hats off to Donna Murphy, as Anna, Lou Diamond Phillips, as the King of Siam, and everyone else (including Rodgers and Hammerstein, of course) who had a hand in this production. Christopher Renshaw directed. (Neil Simon, 250 W. 52nd St. 307-4100.)

Love Thy Neighbor—Jackie Mason's latest two-hour monologue: his range may be limited, but his timing is perfect, and the house rocks with laughter. (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Making Porn—Rex Chandler has the role of the straight star Jack Hawk in Ronnie Larsen's play about the gay-porn business. (Actors' Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 239-6200.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—The first of two outdoor productions by the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival, directed by Terrence O'Brien. (Boscobel Restoration, Garrison, N.Y. For ticket information and directions, call 1-914 265-9575.)

Papa—In John deGroot's one-man play, the fine, energetic actor Len Cariou gives a valiantly gruff portrayal of Ernest Hemingway—whom we encounter in the midst of a bender one day in 1959 (two years before he shot himself)—but he gets sideswiped by the overloaded script, which has no surprises, way too many words, and not nearly enough fresh insights. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

Pick Up Ax—A comedy about blackmail at a personal-computer company, written by Anthony Clarvoe. (29th Street Repertory Theatre, 212 W. 29th St. 465-0575. Closes July 13.)

Rent—The late Jonathan Larson's rock opera, inspired by Puccini's "La Bohème," stands every assumption of the traditional musical on its head. It can't support the narrative overload (eight separate stories are told), yet by the end of the evening Larson's talent has taken the audience to places the musical never ventures these days. Directed by Michael Greif. (2/19/96) (Nederlander, 208 W. 41st St. 921-8000.)

Seven Guitars—August Wilson's exciting new play, which flashes back to the final days of a Pittsburgh blues singer (Keith David), sends us stirring news of black life in the late forties. The seven guitars of the title are the seven memorable characters whose high times and dashed dreams Wilson turns into beautiful, complex music—a funky, wailing, irresistible Chicago blues. Lloyd Richards is the director. (4/15/96) (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All for You—Christopher Durang's 1979 comedy, starring Geraldine Librandi and directed by Mark Cannistraro. Saturdays at 6, through July. (Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. S. 255-5438.)

Molissa Fenley's "Chair," at Wave Hill.

Sonya—Julie Harris stars as Tolstoy's wife, in Leon Katz's drama about the couple's tempestuous relationship. A Phoenix Theatre production. (Purchase College, Purchase, N.Y. For tickets and information, call 1-914 251-6290. Closes July 21.)

The Trojan Women: A Love Story—Marin Mazzie, Tom Nelis, Sharon Scruggs, and Steven Skybell are in the cast of En Garde Arts' new site-specific production—a variation, with music, on the Greek tragedy. Written by Charles L. Mee, Jr., and directed by Tina Landau. The site is the ruins of the East River Park Amphitheatre. (F.D.R. Drive and Grand St. For information and tickets, call 279-4200. Closes July 14.)

LONG RUNS

Beauty and the Beast: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **Blue Man Group/Tubes:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **Cats:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **The Fantasticks:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **Grease!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying:** Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100. (Closes July 14.) . . . **Master Class:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Les Misérables:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **Miss Saigon:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **Perfect Crime:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **The Phantom of the Opera:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **Rob Becker's Defending the Caveman:** Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100. . . . **Show Boat:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **Smokey Joe's Café:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **Stomp:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **Sunset Boulevard:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **Tony n' Tina's Wedding:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **Victor/Victoria:** Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.

DANCE

Pilobolus Dance Theatre—July 10, July 12, and July 15 at 8 and July 13 at 2: "Collideoscope," "Duet," "The Particle Zoo," and "Land's Edge." . . . ¶ July 11 and July 13 at 8: "The Doubling Cube," "Pyramid of the Moon," "Walklyndon," and "Aeros." . . . ¶ July 16 at 8: "Untitled," "Pilobolus," "Quatrejeux," and "Day 2." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through July 20.)

Central Park SummerStage—"I took the gig because I needed money to get my company on the road," Marlies Yearby says, explaining how she became the choreographer for "Rent." The Californian found the rehearsal experience, with novices willing to work for next to nothing, to be a familiar one—until the play opened. "Then it just took over." With "Rent" safely resettled in its uptown venue, Yearby has rededicated herself to her own company, the Movin' Spirits Dance Theatre, which will perform excerpts from "That Was Like This. . . This Was Like That" and the complete "Of Urban Intimacies," created with guitarist Vernon Reid. With the Lula Washington Dance Theatre. (Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 12 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

Dances for Wave Hill—The summer series of site-specific works returns to the Bronx garden. Molissa Fenley has adapted last year's "Chair" for a rustic garden bench. She began choreographing the seated solo at a moment when less was not merely more, it was medically necessary: she was convalescing from a knee injury. The vocabulary she hit upon—straight arms banking through space and slow, almost prayerful revisions of posture—conveys a dreamy feeling of grace in free fall and, despite her lower-body immobility, a surprisingly vast sense of space. Also appearing: the Nicholas Leichter company (on a meadow), Gestures Dance Ensemble (around the aquatic garden), and, in the Sunday performance only, João Fiadeiro (from Portugal, in a work he will create when he gets here). (W. 249th St. at Independence Ave., the Bronx. For information, call 1-718 549-3200. July 10 at 6:30 and July 14 at 5.)

Fiorello Summer Dance Festival—July 11 at 7:30: Urban Bush Women. . . . ¶ July 12-13 at 7:30: The Nai-Ni Chen Dance Company presents two new works and last year's "Calligraphy II," inspired by the brushwork gestures of Chinese writing. With a few simple props, the Taiwan-born choreographer has given the evanescent movements a sort of wistful solidity—at one point in the work, company members dawdle or streak across the stage with long, brightly colored ribbons that briefly hold the traces of their movements. (LaGuardia Concert Hall, Amsterdam Ave. at 65th St. 741-8185.)

OUT OF TOWN

New York City Ballet—July 10 at 8:15: "Mozartiana," "Prodigal Son," and "Jazz (Six Syncopated Movements)." . . . ¶ July 11 at 2: "Swan Lake," "Fancy Free," and "Who Cares?" . . . ¶ July 11 at 8:15: "Swan Lake," Prodigal Son," and "Fearful Symmetries." . . . ¶ July 12 at 8:15 and July 13 at 2: "Coppélia." . . . ¶ July 13 at 8:15: "Mozartiana," "Fearful Symmetries," and "Jazz (Six Syncopated Movements)." (Saratoga Performing Arts Center, Saratoga Springs, N.Y. 1-518 587-3330.)

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—July 9-12 at 8:30 and July 13 at 2 and 8:30: Nikolais and Murray Louis Dance. . . . ¶ July 11-12 at 8, July 13 at 5, and July 14 at 7: Jonathan Lunn and Sam-Ang Sam. (Becket, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 243-0745.)

STEPHEN LACK

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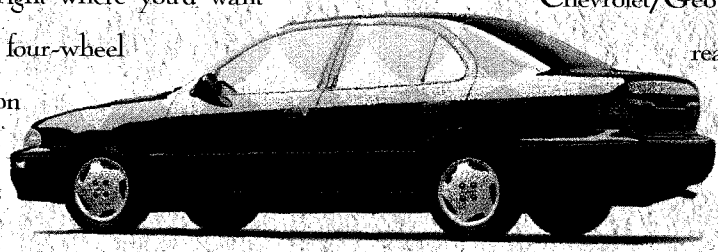

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NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

Lollapalooza '96—Rock's preëminent movable feast finds itself embroiled in controversy this year, thanks to the headlining presence of Metallica. Do these metal galoots belong at the top of a bill that was originally conceived as an alternative-rock showcase? (Since the band's latest masterpiece, "Load," is the No. 1 record in America, "alternative" would be the wrong label no matter what they played.) To complicate matters, town supervisors across the land are closing their gates to Lollapalooza, threatened perhaps by Metallica's (presumably) beer-guzzling fans, Soundgarden's fierce neo-Zeppelin thunder, the gangsta rap of Staten Island's Wu-Tang Clan, the tattoos and gluey hair of Rancid, and the bad posture of those we-promise-we're-retiring-this-time protopunks, the Ramones. Notwithstanding all this spectacle, the real action this year will be on the second stage, which features such up-and-comers as Girls Against Boys, Ben Folds Five, and Ruby. (Downing Stadium, Randall's Island. 307-7171. July 10-11 at 2.)

"First Lady of Song"—A salute to the late, great Ella Fitzgerald, with Lionel Hampton, Bobby Short, Tommy Flanagan, Ruth Brown, and others. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. July 10 at 8.)

Willie Nelson—Since reaching a settlement with the I.R.S. which cost him millions, ol' Texas Willie has shifted into artistic and commercial overdrive. In 1993, he released "Across the Border," his best studio work in years. The following year brought "Healing Hands of Time," which featured, among other incidentals, a sixty-piece orchestra. Now he's back with the spare but emotionally rich "Spirit," which includes such wistful treasures as "Your Memory Won't Die in My Grave." (Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. 921-1940. July 10 at 8.)

"Country Magic"—Three pedigreed cowgirls come to Central Park. Carlene Carter (daughter of June Carter Cash and Carl Smith) spent the first ten years of her career ducking her lineage and trying to be a New Waver like her ex-husband, Nick Lowe. Stuttering Mel Tillis's daughter Pam has her father's talent for songwriting and his sense of humor, too—she's a honky-tonk angel with class and sass. Lorrie Morgan's father, George, was with the Grand Ole Opry for more than twenty-five years; she's been a member since 1984. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. For information about tickets, which are required, call 307-7171. July 11 at 6.)

Chieftains / Nanci Griffith—From their late-fifties work as members of Ceoltoiri Chualann, Sean O Riada's visionary ensemble, to their recent collaborations with Van Morrison and James Galway, these instrumental wizards have been doing for traditional Irish music what Bill Monroe did for the rural American string band—treating it with a respect and dignity that lift it well above any salt-of-the-earth contentiousness. / Even though dozens of country artists have had hits with her gentle songs, Griffith's best-selling album in more than a decade was "Other Voices, Other Rooms," her 1993 collection of cover tunes. Go figure. (Jones Beach Theatre. 1-516 221-1000. July 11 at 8.)

Charlie Watts Quintet—The Stones' poker-faced drummer has always been a jazzbo at heart, and, in recent years, as Mick and Keith's public appearances have grown fewer and farther between, he has been able to indulge his passion. With vocalist Bernard Fowler. (Supper Club. July 11 at 8.)

Huey Lewis—It's hip to be square, Lewis and the News asserted back in the eighties. Now it isn't (though Hootie & the Blowfish might dispute the point), but they still are. The clean-cut, regular-dude singer and his sturdy band haven't changed much; "Four Chords & Several Years Ago," a collection of cover songs that pay homage to the fifties and the pre-psychedelic sixties, is their most recent contribution. (Westbury Music Fair. 1-516 334-0800. July 11 at 8.)

Smashing Pumpkins / Garbage—On their meticulously crafted, mammoth double album, "Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness," these Chicago misfits create a dense, sprawling sound that draws on rock and roll's richest mineral deposits, with trace elements of Pink Floyd, Cheap Trick, and Led Zeppelin, and a lode of New Wave. It's a monster of a record; the only thing that's bigger is the ego of chief Pumpkinhead Billy Corgan. / They're far more than just another band with three Midwestern guys and a Scottish female singer: Garbage's secret weapon is the celebrated producer Butch Vig, the man behind the knobs on Nirvana's "Nevermind" and Smashing Pumpkins' "Siamese Dream." The band's eponymous début album is an eyebrow-raising blend of electronic textures and slashing guitars. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. July 12-13 at 8. . . .¶ Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. July 14 at 8.)

Donna Summer—Thanks to "Love to Love You Baby" and "I Feel Love," most people think of Summer as the Queen of Disco, but she's actually a supple-voiced diva with a subtle croon. In the second half of the seventies, aided by the glitzy producer Giorgio Moroder, she turned out seven memorable records, culminating in the infamous "Bad Girls" (1979). Since then, except for such brief flashes as "She Works Hard for the Money" (1983), her career has been for the most part uneventful, yet her singing is still superb—she obliterates Liza Minnelli in the duet "Does He Love You?," on Liza's new disk. Toot toot, beep beep. (Jones Beach Theatre. July 12 at 8.)

Subdudes—The 'Dudes (who also play Tramps, on July 11) are a New Orleans-based R. & B.-and-rock ensemble that, in the manner of NRBQ, has had more success in pleasing critics and other musicians than in finding an audience. (Bonnie Raitt appears on their new album, they once backed up Shawn Colvin, and lead singer Tommy Malone has performed with Rosanne Cash.) Live, they're sensational. (Prospect Park Bandshell. July 13 at 7.)

Bill Laswell and Friends—A bearded and imposing figure from the fringes of avant-pop, Laswell is perhaps best known as the bassist for the funk band Material. He is also a first-rank conceptualist producer, whose talents have helped enliven records by artists as diverse as Peter Gabriel, Motörhead, Herbie Hancock, and Mick Jagger. He's picked up a lot of friends on his travels; among the many that will be joining him for this free gig are Golden Palominos drummer Anton Fier and sonic terrorist Jah Wobble. Expect the unlikely. (Central Park SummerStage. July 13 at 3.)

REO Speedwagon / Foreigner / Peter Frampton—Music from the Carter Administration. (Jones Beach Theatre. July 13 at 7:30.)

Paul Anka—He's written more than eight hundred songs, and it's frightening to think how many of them are lodged permanently in our brains. There's "My Way," of course, "Put Your Head on My Shoulder," "You're Having My Baby," and even the theme from "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson." Probably the only thing that this Canadian has ever done wrong is invest in the lowly Ottawa Senators. (Westbury Music Fair. July 13 at 8 and July 14 at 7.)

Johnny Clegg—The South African pop star (who originally hails from Lancashire) and his group, Juluka. (Central Park SummerStage. July 14 at 3.)

Styx / Kansas—Although the subgenre known as progressive rock was primarily an English phenomenon, Yes, Genesis, and Emerson, Lake, and Palmer being its primary exponents, the pleasures of juxtaposing screechy guitars and strangled synthesizers with billowing capes and medieval iconography appealed to the Yanks as well. Of these two American prog-rock leviathans, Styx was arguably the better, if only for its cheery castrato harmonies and its groundbreaking forays into the so-called power ballad (the most egregious example is "Babe"). Kansas had more hair and a violin player, but, following the massive success of "Carry On Wayward Son" and "Dust in the Wind," the band chose the unlikely path of spiritual redemption and became born-again Christians. (Jones Beach Theatre. July 14 at 7:30.)

The Who—In the notes accompanying the 1994 boxed set "Thirty Years of Maximum R. & B.," Pete Townshend claimed, "I don't like The Who much." *Right.* Seeing as how (some twenty-seven years after the fact) he was able to turn "Tommy" into a Broadway money-spinner, it's really no surprise that this relentless ash-sifter, who's well on his way to becoming the Edmund Wilson of rock, should now be reanimating his second "opera," "Quadrophenia," which originally appeared in 1973. Unfortunately, the four-sided tale of England's mod generation must now be told minus the explosive work of drummer Keith Moon, the one band member who did die before he got old. (Madison Square Garden. July 16 at 8.)

The Who perform "Quadrophenia" at Madison Square Garden.

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Vocalist **Phillip Officer** is currently in the midst of an extended run. Dining.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Mondays belong to the

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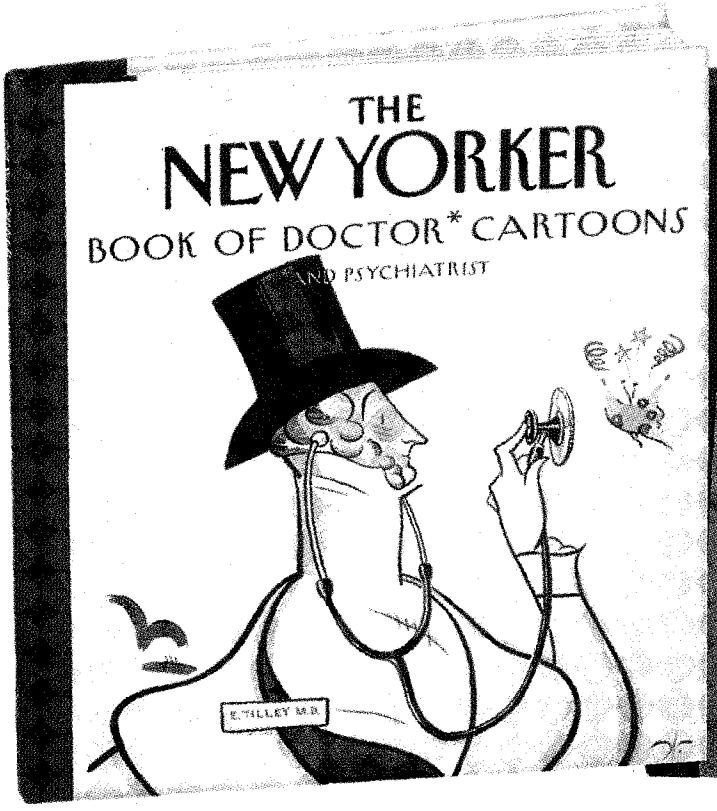

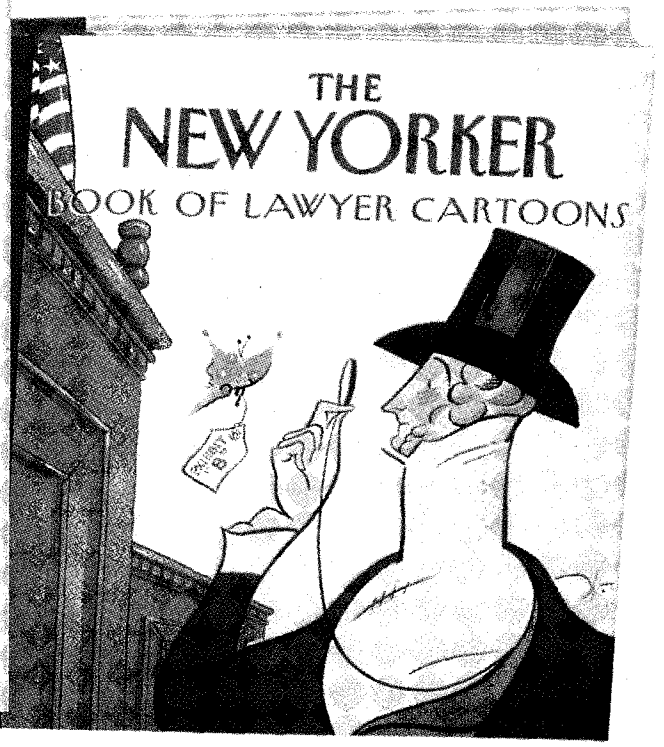

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AND WHAT'S FUNNY about lawyers is **THE NEW YORKER BOOK OF LAWYER CARTOONS.** Here, in 85 hilarious cartoons, are lawyers in the courtroom, in their offices, ambulance chasing, winning — but mostly losing — cases ("I've just about resigned myself to your getting twenty years."); lawyers specializing, suing negligent children, negotiating a "pre-victual agreement" before ordering a Chinese lunch. Lawyers observed, teased, and immortalized by some of our most brilliant cartoonists, from Charles Addams and George Price and William Steig to William Hamilton, Lee Lorenz, Michael Maslin, Jack Ziegler and Charles Barsotti.

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Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and Johnny Parker, Fridays and Saturdays to the Freddy Francis trio, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—July 13: The Sugar Hill Jazz Quartet. *Dining.*

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through July 14: seventies lite-jazz superstar **CHUCK MANGIONE.** The **JAMES MOODY** quartet gets the call on July 16. Dining.

ONLY CONNECT

Web Sightings

The Onion (http://www.theonion.com.www.html)—The deadpan headlines ("Clinton Breaks Off Talks with Carpetland," "Secret of Fire Falls Into Russian Hands") that tart up this satirical weekly suggest another era (more Ernie Kovacs or Pat Paulsen than Jay Leno) if not another area (The Onion originates, in both Web and print versions, in Madison, Wisconsin). It's the sort of humor that's underrepresented on the Web, where satire is too often vicious and pedestrian. Neither hypersnide nor tragically hip, The Onion turns the hot new craze of digging through rubble for loved ones into Dadaist poetry (strangers show up at bomb sites feigning bereavement and panic), and scores political points, with a Phillip K. Dick twist, by detailing the damage a terrorist bomb did to Bob Dole's outer hull (the suspects: "Luddite extremists who oppose the election of Bob Dole, a servo-monitored, bipedal animatron, to the presidency").

The soul of The Onion's wit, like that of its antecedents *Mad* magazine and *National Lampoon*, is brevity. News in Brief offers snippets lurid ("Feisty Senior Strafes Jet, Kills 345") and timely ("White Church Protected from Fire by God"), along with a few stories that border on the pathologically sweet ("Astronomer James Mercer startled the scientific community yesterday when he announced the universe revolves around his beautiful 12-year-old son Craig"). Some of the undergrad humor doesn't make it (the weather map is silly, and the cartoons are forgettable, with the exception of "Red Meat," by Max Cannon, who dances a twisted lambada of his own devising), but by and large The Onion moves effortlessly from stories national in scope ("Vincenzo Brothers Give Federal Government Five Days to Pay Off National Debt") to parodies of the sort of small-town newspaper items ("Nap Revitalizes Area Dog") from which you learn less by reading more. It's in this Mayberry mode that The Onion is at its most surprising and sublime: "Oh Glory to You, My Sweet Tinfoil," is the title of one recent Op-Ed piece, which evolves, somehow naturally, from a dweebish ode to aluminum foil into a death-by-asphyxiation scene involving plastic wrap.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through July 13: **JOANNE BRACKEEN** and **CECIL MC BEE.** Although she's been on the scene for four decades now, Brackeen keeps growing, her bandleading and writing skills perfectly in sync with her sharply modernist piano stylings. A bassist extraordinaire, McBee can probably crack walnuts between his knuckles. He's an intensely powerful instrumentalist who brings passion and intelligence to music that oscillates between the avant-garde and the contemporary mainstream—easy enough when your C.V. includes gigs with everyone from Dinah Washington to Chico Freeman. Dining.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A sleek piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Through July 14: the **RODNEY KENDRICKS** sextet and vocalist **KEVIN MAHOGANY.** Unlike most contemporary jazz soloists, Kendricks sees the big picture. A bold, percussive pianist, he thinks like an old-school bandleader, considering composition, tonal color, ensemble texture, and individual voicings—the entire band is his palette. His new CD, "Last Chance for Common Sense," starts in the soil of Monk, Sun Ra, and Ellington, mixes in a little exotic percussion, and comes up smelling like a whole new flower. Mahagony shouts the blues, croons ballads, scats bebop, and does all the other stuff a well-rounded jazz singer has to do in the late twentieth century. He's got the right mixture of self-possession and friskiness. The **TOMMY FLANAGAN** trio takes over on July 16. **LES PAUL** is your man every Monday. Dining.

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—July 10-13: Piano and bass with **STEVE KUHN** and **DAVID FINCK.** Dining.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Virtual-reality guru **JARON LANIER** and Moroccan bassist **HASSAN HAKMOUN** go musical globe-trotting on July 10.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—Vocalists **SAM HARRIS** and **LAURIE BEECHMAN** are the stars-in-residence. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through July 14: **BRUCE BARTH,** a young keyboard modernist forging his way on the path of neo-con heroes like Herbie Hancock. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through July 14: vocalist **JEANIE BRYSON.** On her recent tribute to Peggy Lee, "Some Cats Know," Bryson transcends Lee's influence and reveals an edgy rhythmic sensibility. In performance, she's a charmer. Wynton Marsalis alumnus **WESSELL ANDERSON** has the floor starting July 16. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

ROCK, ETC.

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—July 12: The **HOLY MODAL ROUNDERS,** the latest in a sporadic series of reunions featuring guitarist Steve Weber and fiddler Peter Stampfel, whose giddy blend of tradition and psychedelia was a welcome antidote to the high-mindedness of the mid-sixties folk movement. July 16: An evening of topnotch folk with Jan Arden, Billy Mann, and Patty Griffin.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (420-8392)—July 11: **MAYFIELD,** featuring Curt Smith, formerly of Tears for Fears. July 16: **CHRIS WHITLEY** and **CONGO NORVELL.**

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—July 12: **ROOMFUL OF BLUES.** July 13: **JAMES COTTON.** There are only a handful of world-class blues-harmonica players, and Cotton is one of them. Tutored as a teenager by the legendary Sonny Boy Williamson II, he made his first recording for Sam Phillips's Sun Records in 1953 (as a member of Howlin' Wolf's band) and spent more than a decade as Muddy Waters' harp player during the golden age of Chicago blues. After all these years—as demonstrated by his excellent new "Deep in the Blues"—he's still razor sharp.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender and stainless-steel vault deep in the heart of the meat district. **DJ SPOOKY** spins on July 16.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—July 15: **RASPUTINA,** a bizarre quartet of corseted female cellists who play pop tunes. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Flannery's, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—A well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features (pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports) and a few of the near-classics (a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis).

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—July 10-11: **PORNO FOR PYROS** and **CIBO MATTO.** Led by former Jane's Addiction front man and Lollapalooza (see Concerts) organizer Perry Farrell, the Pyros go effortlessly from ethereal ballads to high-fibre funk. Farrell, a high-strung, unpredictable Queens native with a hyena howl, is a riveting performer. The Japanese duo Cibo Matto churns out kitschy broken-English raps about food ("Beef Jerky," "White Pepper Ice Cream") over a sonic bricolage that crams together some of the most strikingly original sounds that have ever found their way onto a record. The group's stunning (if occasionally grating) début, "Viva! La Women," is one of this year's must-have albums. July 13-14: The **BOGMEN.** July 16: **SOUL COUGHING.** In 1994, this excellent downtown combo released its first album, "Ruby Vroom," an impressive slab of tiny, insinuating melodies and skittering acid-jazz grooves. The band's sophomore effort, "Irresistible Bliss"—the result of a year's worth of non-stop touring—is a muscular (if slightly less inspired) wonder.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—**CORNERSHOP** touches down on July 11. The Anglo-Pakistani pop of this British import has the cheeky appeal of, say, Blur or Oasis. But while those bands revel in the Union Jack, Cornershop explores what it's like to be on the outside looking in. Their sound suggests what the Smiths might have become had they taken lessons from Ravi Shankar. July 14: **SPARKLEHORSE,** the pet project of chimney sweep and slacker extraordinaire Mark Linkous. With lazy rhythms and fuzz-box vocals, he chronicles America as a kind of pleasant ruin; small towns and alluring widows appear in his songs as though seen through the hazy windows of a beat-up Dodge.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—**ELYSIAN FIELDS** makes haunting, gilded-lily pop on July 14. July 15: A double bill featuring former Dream Syndicate singer **STEVE WYNN** and alterative rockers **COME.**

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A great grass hut with a fruit-and-bamboo motif, dedicated to calypso, reggae, and the bossa nova. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—July 10: The **AVERAGE WHITE BAND.** It's been more than twenty years since this Scottish group released the irresistible "Pick Up the Pieces." No one has done a better job of straddling the fault line between R. & B. and funk. The elastic guitars and hip-hopping horns are still intact. July 11: The **SUBDUDES** (see Concerts). July 12-13: **KOOL & THE GANG.** Led by bassist Robert (Kool) Bell, this band began its career in the mid-sixties as the Jazziacs; the group became a brand name with the addition of ultra-smooth lead vocalist James (JT) Taylor and mega-hits like "Ladies' Night," "Joanna," "Get Down on It," and the inescapable "Celebration." Taylor left for a solo career in 1988, and the hits dried up. But for this occasion the boys have reunited. A good thing, too: in its heyday, Kool & the Gang was one of the best live acts around. With funk legends the **GAP BAND.** July 15: **GOV'T MULE,** a bristling Allman Brothers offshoot led by slide guitarist Warren Haynes. With the **SCUD MOUNTAIN BOYS,** who play spry country rock that's nearly as cool as their name.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—July 18: Seventies retro-rockers **NANCY BOY.**

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MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

New York *Times* Centennial Celebration—"Centennial" here refers to Adolph S. Ochs's purchase, in 1896, of the forty-five-year-old paper. Four shows are up until the fall; see listings for the Museum of Modern Art, the American Museum of Natural History, the Morgan Library, and the New York Public Library.

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Winslow Homer," a comprehensive survey of the painter's career, comprising nearly two hundred paintings, watercolors, and drawings. Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "Toulouse-Lautrec." More than a hundred works drawn from the museum's collection, including large posters, smaller lithographs, and oil-and-gouache portraits and figure studies. Through Sept. 15. . . . ¶ "Ancient Art from the Shumei Family Collection," antiquities from Egypt, China, Central Asia, and Iran. Through Sept. 1. . . . ¶ After a painstaking ten-year conservation-and-restoration effort, the Gubbio Studiolo—a masterful trompe-l'oeil Renaissance chamber, with intricately inlaid wood panels that give the illusion of open cupboards containing books, scientific instruments, and other objects—has been reinstalled. . . . ¶ "Picturing Paradise: Colonial Photography of Samoa, 1875-1925." Portraits and landscapes in a variety of formats, including albums, postcards, stereographs, and photogravures. Through Aug. 4. . . . ¶ "Art of the Deccani Sultans." Through Aug. 25. . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden is open (weather permitting), with sculptures by Rodin, Lachaise, Lipchitz, Caro, Smith (David), and Smith (Tony). (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"From Bauhaus to Pop: Masterworks Given by Philip Johnson." Through Sept. 3. . . . ¶ "Pictures of the Times: A Century of Prints from the New York *Times*." Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ "Picasso and Portraiture: Representation and Transformation" includes a hundred and thirty paintings, and nearly as many works on paper, depicting lovers, wives, poets, art dealers, and children. Through Sept. 17. . . . ¶ "Thinking Print: Books to Billboards, 1980-95," an ambitious and engaging show devoted to a rather unsexy topic. It attempts to cover a lot of ground in a thematically unified manner—linking the advent of new printmakers (e.g., Barbara Kruger, Félix González-Torres, Kiki Smith) with such recent trends as the resurgence of politically engaged art and of metaphors of the body. It also manages to sneak in a mini course on the distinctions between various printmaking mediums. All in all, a competent overview, though it lacks the excitement of the museum's 1988 "Committed to Print"—which was also, incidentally, curated by Deborah Wye. Through Sept. 10. (For the run of the Picasso show, the museum's hours are Saturdays through Mondays, 9:30 to 6; Tuesdays, 11 to 6; and Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30. Timed-entry tickets to Picasso are available in the lobby and through Ticketmaster, at 307-4545.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Meret Oppenheim: Beyond the Teacup." The first retrospective of the intrepid Surrealist's œuvre to be presented in the United States. Through Oct. 9. . . . ¶ "Africa: The Art of a Continent." The most unusual large-scale exhibition the Guggenheim has mounted in several years neither fulfills the museum's historical mandate to present avant-garde art nor concerns itself much with the influence of African arts on modernism (the subject of MOMA's important but hotly contested "Primitivism" show of 1984). The exhibition is bound to infuriate both scholars and ideologues with the manner in which it collapses historical, ethnographic, and aesthetic distinctions between diverse cultures (imagine an exhibition titled "Europe: The Art of a Continent"); it's difficult to grant that the predominantly Islamic arts of Northern Africa and the antiquities of Egypt have much in common, or that either can be lumped with the many different cultures of sub-Saharan Africa. In presenting them all at once, the show seems to propound two overlapping but not particularly cogent ideological agendas: a celebratory Pan-Africanism on the one hand and a "Family of Man" group hug on the other. That said, the show is still a must-see for its rich selection of resplendent objects. And the catalogue is filled with excellent essays by renowned scholars of the new black studies. Through Sept. 29. . . . ¶ "In/Sight: African Photographers, 1940 to the Present." Through Sept. 22. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Perpetual Mirage: Photographic Narratives of the Desert West." A survey of books and prints stretching from Timothy O'Sullivan and Carleton Watkins in the nineteenth century to Robert Adams and Richard Misrach today. In between are contributions from Lewis Baltz, Edward S. Curtis, Joe Deal, Laura Gilpin, Mark Klett, Dorothea Lange, John Pfahl, Eliot Porter, Frederick Sommer, Robert Venturi, JoAnn Verburg, Edward Weston, and others. Through Sept. 22. . . . ¶ "NYNY: City of Ambition." Interpretations of our metropolis in an abundance of mediums, done between 1900 and 1960. The artists include Diane Arbus, Stuart Davis, Elsie Driggs, Edward Hopper, Franz Kline, Reginald Marsh, Jackson Pollock, and Alfred Stieglitz. Through Oct. 27. . . . ¶ "Paul Cadmus: The Sailor Trilogy," a display of the ninety-one-year-old painter's notorious satirical suite: "Shore Leave" (1933), "The Fleet's In!" (1934), and "Sailors and Floosies" (1938). Through Sept. 1. (A show of the artist's recent drawings is at DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St., through July 26.) . . . ¶ "An American Story," a chronological survey of twentieth-century paintings and sculptures, both well known and obscure, from the museum's collection. Through Oct. 6. . . . ¶ A stylized, gardenlike installation of video sculptures, by Shigeko Kubota. Through Aug. 25. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

"Picturing Paradise: Colonial Photography of Samoa, 1875-1925," at the Metropolitan Museum.

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—An exhibition that explores the relationship between scientific research and its presentation in the media, specifically, the New York *Times*. Through Sept. 29. . . . ¶ The Hall of Vertebrate Origins has reopened, its dropped ceiling removed to reveal Calvert Vaux's skylit design. All the better to see the dunkleosteus, a sixteen-foot-long hanging model of an armored fish, based on the four-foot-long fossil of its head, with self-sharpening jawbones. . . . ¶ Large-format black-and-white and color photographs documenting a hundred endangered North American plants and animals. Through Oct. 6. . . . ¶ "Amber: Window to the Past." Through Sept. 2. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"Converging Cultures: Art & Identity in Spanish America." An intelligently curated, wonderfully intriguing exhibition of Latin American art from the sixteenth century through the early twentieth, focussing on the interpenetrations of native and colonial cultures. Through Aug. 11. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"Being William Morris: A Centenary Exhibition," which is taken largely from the Morgan's own superb collection, presents every aspect of the Victorian artist-philosopher's career: drawings for book illustrations and stained glass, vibrant wallpaper and fabric designs, socialist manifestos, and, of course, exquisitely printed books from his Kelmscott Press, many of them in ornate, elegant bindings. . . . ¶ "Documenting the Times: Adolph S. Ochs and the Early Years of the New York *Times*." Through Sept. 15. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"Headlines, Deadlines, Bylines: The New York *Times* Morgue, 1896-1996." Through Oct. 18. . . . ¶ Visitors to "The Global Library—http://www.nypl.org" can step up to one of fourteen computer stations and embark on a guided tour of the World Wide Web. (Or, if you prefer, you can visit the exhibit's Web site from home.) Also on view are a host of nonvirtual objects, such as Sumerian cuneiform tablets, Chinese woodblock prints, a Gutenberg Bible, and the 1727 "New England Primer." Through Aug. 17. . . . ¶ "The Hand of the Poet," a display of original manuscripts by masters from Donne to Eliot. Through July 31. (Open Mondays, and Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"Puppets and Performing Objects in the 20th Century," a gathering of puppets, marionettes, and other constructions designed by a wide range of artists, including Alfred Jarry, Bil Baird, Jim Henson, Pat Oleszko, Henry Selick and Tim Burton, Lee Breuer, Julie Taymor, and Robert Wilson. Through Sept. 28. (Open daily, except Sundays, noon to 6, and Monday and Thursday evenings until 8.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Summer hours: unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

Philip Pearlstein—Portraits from the past fifty years, including images of the artists Scott

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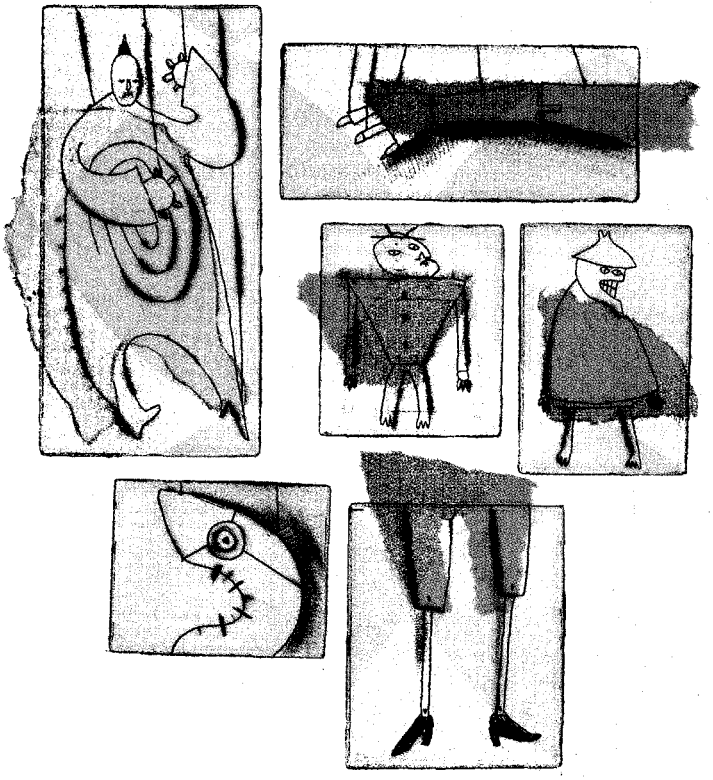
Burton, Alex Katz, and Raphael Soyer. Through July 31. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Breaking All the Rules"—A recap of the season, with works by Beckmann, Coe, Corinth, Grosz, Klimt, Kokoschka, Litwak, Pippin, Schiele, and others. Through Sept. 6. (Galerie St. Etienne, 24 W. 57th St. Closed Mondays.)

"Fiber and Form: The Woman's Legacy"—Works by seven artists who have incorporated sewing and textiles into their art: Hannelore Baron, Lee Bontecou, Nancy Grossman, Eve Peri, Anne Ryan, Betye Saar, and Lenore Tawney. Through Sept. 3. (Rosenfeld, 24 W. 57th St. Closed Mondays.)

"Going Places"—The coincidence of two different group shows' bearing the same title probably indicates that these gallery people would rather be in Europe. At **Adams**, 50 W. 57th St.: Real and imagined departures, journeys, and destinations in several mediums, by such artists as Robert Arneson, Luis Cruz Azaceta, Joan Brown, and Peter Saul. Through Aug. 16. . . . **Hirschl & Adler**, 21 E. 70th St.: American and European paintings, drawings, and prints, by, among others, Eugène Boudin, Ralston Crawford, Rackstraw Downes, Mabel Dwight, William Stanley Haseltine, Edward Hopper, Louis Lozowick, and John Marin. Through Aug. 16.



Puppets on view at the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

Group Show—Paintings and collages from the fifties by Agnes Martin, Alice Trumbull Mason, and Anne Ryan. Through July 12. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

Short List—Laurent de Brunhoff, Ryan, 24 W. 57th St. Through Aug. 2. . . . **Paul Cadmus**, DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through July 26. . . . **Jacqueline Donachie**, Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Through July 12.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

Jene Highstein—Recent sculptures, some in concrete, some in steel, along with a survey of drawings. Through Aug. 17. (Ace, 275 Hudson St. Opens at 1. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

Fura S. (Nobi Shioya)—Exquisitely detailed small figural sculptures submerged in water in eccentrically made miniature tanks, many of a tantalizingly blurry translucence. These self-effacing homages to Rodin seem like urgent precipitates from the murky byways of a European traveller's dreams. They're elusive, evocative, and likable. Through July 20. (123 Watts Gallery, 123 Watts St. Opens at noon. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

Clemens Weiss—A hundred collages of ink drawings and pages from an art encyclopedia, encased in vitrines. Also on view are large drawings on wood as well as floor sculptures made of industrial plate glass. Through July 26. (Feldman, 31 Mercer St.)

"Boliw: Shrine Figures of the Bamana, Mali"—A group of twelve sacred sculptures, made from such materials as wood, earth, clay, bones, blood, urine, beer, and bark. Through Oct. 5. (Blum, 99 Wooster St.)

"By the Sea"—A large, varied selection of images of sea and shore, including works by Jennifer Bartlett, Vija Celmins, Bruce Cratsley, Eric Fischl, Jane Freilicher, April Gornik, Joel Meyerowitz, Fairfield Porter, and Hiroshi Sugimoto. Through July 26. (Fotouhi Cramer, 560 Broadway.)

"Selections: Summer '96"—Drawings by emerging and underrepresented artists, including Louise Belcourt, Nina Bovasso, Tomas Esson, Cyril Olanier, Hiram Rodriguez-Mora, and Lynne Woods Turner. Through July 26. (The Drawing Center, 35 Wooster St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays, and Wednesday evenings until 8.)

"Sweat"—A collaborative installation about heat, fantasy, and escape. Among the thirty-one artists involved are Kim Jones, Elliott Green, Sue deBeer, David Byrne, Laura Sansone, and Yuval Adler. Through July 20. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway. Closed Mondays; open Friday and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Group Shows—At **Beitzel**, 102 Prince St.: Recent paintings and sculptures by gallery artists, including Radcliffe Bailey, Dawoud Bey, Squeak Carnwath, Willy Heeks, and Martin Mull. Through July 19. . . . **Bonakdar**, 130 Prince St.: Sculptures, paintings, and photographs by Uta Barth, Mat Collishaw, Charles Long, and others. Through Sept. 7. (Closed Mondays.) . . . **Kasmin**, 74 Grand St.: Crudely formed plaster-and-papier-mâché sculptures by Donald Baechler, akin to his childlike paintings; a little whitewashed house from Konstantin Kakanias, the interior lit by votive candles and painted with wild scenes of sexual license; and a small wood table supporting discarded airplane parts, by Nancy Rubins. Through Sept. 21. . . . **Lennon, Weinberg**, 560 Broadway: Paintings and sculptures by nine women, among them Joan Mitchell, Mia Westerlund Roosen, Valerie Jaudon, and Robin Hill. Through Aug. 1. (Closed Mondays and Fridays.) . . . **Postmasters**, 80 Greene St.: Four paintings, two carpets, and one armchair, by Devon Dikeou, Robert Heckes, and Christian Schumann. A mixed-medium installation and performance by Claude Wampler is in the back room. Through July 13. (Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.) . . . **Shafrazi**, 119 Wooster St.: A selection of paintings by Baechler, Basquiat, Chia, Clemente, Haring, Salle, Scharf, and Schnabel. Through Aug. 2. . . . **Holly Solomon**, 172 Mercer St.: Paintings and drawings by Lower East Side artist Eric Drooker; "Watch," an interactive installation involving computer graphics and sound, by David Rokeby; and "Border Patrol," an interactive video installation by Rokeby's sometime collaborator Paul Garrin. Through Aug. 2. (Closed Mondays.)

Short List—Dale Chihuly, Cowles, 420 West Broadway. Through July 26. . . . **Simon Leung**, Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. Through July 26. . . . **Edward Ruscha**, Printed Matter, 77 Wooster St. Open Saturdays until 7; through July 27.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Steven Brock—Black-and-white portraits and street scenes taken during the annual patron-saint fiesta in the Andean village of Pomabamba, in Peru. Through Aug. 16. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

Lynn Butler—Butler takes her pictures, using slow shutter speeds, from anything that moves—a horse, a train, a motorcycle, an amusement-park ride. The results are views of upstate New York, Acadia National Park (in Maine), Coney Island, and other places, rendered in highly impressionistic washes of color and texture. Through July 31. (Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

Imogen Cunningham (1883-1976)—"Flora," a selection of famously sensual, limpid images of botanical specimens. Through Aug. 2. (Gallery 292, 120 Wooster St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

Jonas Mekas—Enlarged color-film stills, each composed of three or four frames from Mekas's films, which include shots of Jacqueline Kennedy, Robert Frank, Andy Warhol and the Velvet Underground, and Elvis Presley. Through Aug. 16. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St. Closed Mondays.)

"California Photography from a Seventies Perspective, Part III"—Selections from a collection that was formed in a one-month period in 1979. Among the eighteen artists whose work is on view are Diane Buckler, John Divola, Barbara Kasten, Richard Misrach, Leland Rice, and Larry Sultan. Through Aug. 16. (Seagram Building, 375 Park Ave., at 52nd St., fourth floor. Closes Fridays at 1.)

"Dance in America"—A survey of the different styles and approaches of the dance photographers Lois Greenfield, Gjon Mili, and Barbara Morgan. Through Aug. 2. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays.)

"Dearest Comrades"—Prints included in the recently published "Whitman's Men: Walt Whitman's Calamus Poems," by Mark Beard, John Dugdale, Robert Flynt, Bill Jacobson, Russell Maynor, Steve Morrison, and Frank Yamrus. Through Aug. 9. (Wessel O'Connor, 60 Thomas St., between Church St. and West Broadway. Opens at noon.)

"Delirium"—Summer group shows generally shoot for a light spirit and an easily grasped theme (or none at all); this selection of portraits and a few abstract images, from 1854 to the present, has a darker cast, and it hangs together beautifully. "Delirium" has been defined broadly by curator W. M. Hunt as anything from ecstasy to despair to the swooning, sickening feeling you get just looking at certain pictures. Hence W. Eugene Smith's famous "Mad Eyes, Haiti" (1959), of a demented-looking head emerging from (or receding into) total blackness, makes sense in proximity to Felix Meheux's 1905 image of grisly surgical incisions on the face of a cadaver. A grimacing Janis Joplin, head aslant and hair astray, is transformed into a pained goddess by Art Kane, while on the same wall Nancy Burson offers her blurred closeup of a woman with the largest bulging eyes you ever saw. Other notable pictures are reportorial (Jill Waterman, George Krause, Weegee), sexual (Saul Leiter, David Lachapelle, Robert Mapplethorpe), and experimental (Joe Mills, Gerald Slota, Eric Rondepierre). Through Aug. 15. (Ricco/Maresca, 152 Wooster St.)

"Exposure"—Photographs and photo-based works by gallery artists, including Janine Antoni, Nobuyoshi Araki, Larry Clark, Gregory Crewdson, Gunther Förg, Jack Pierson,

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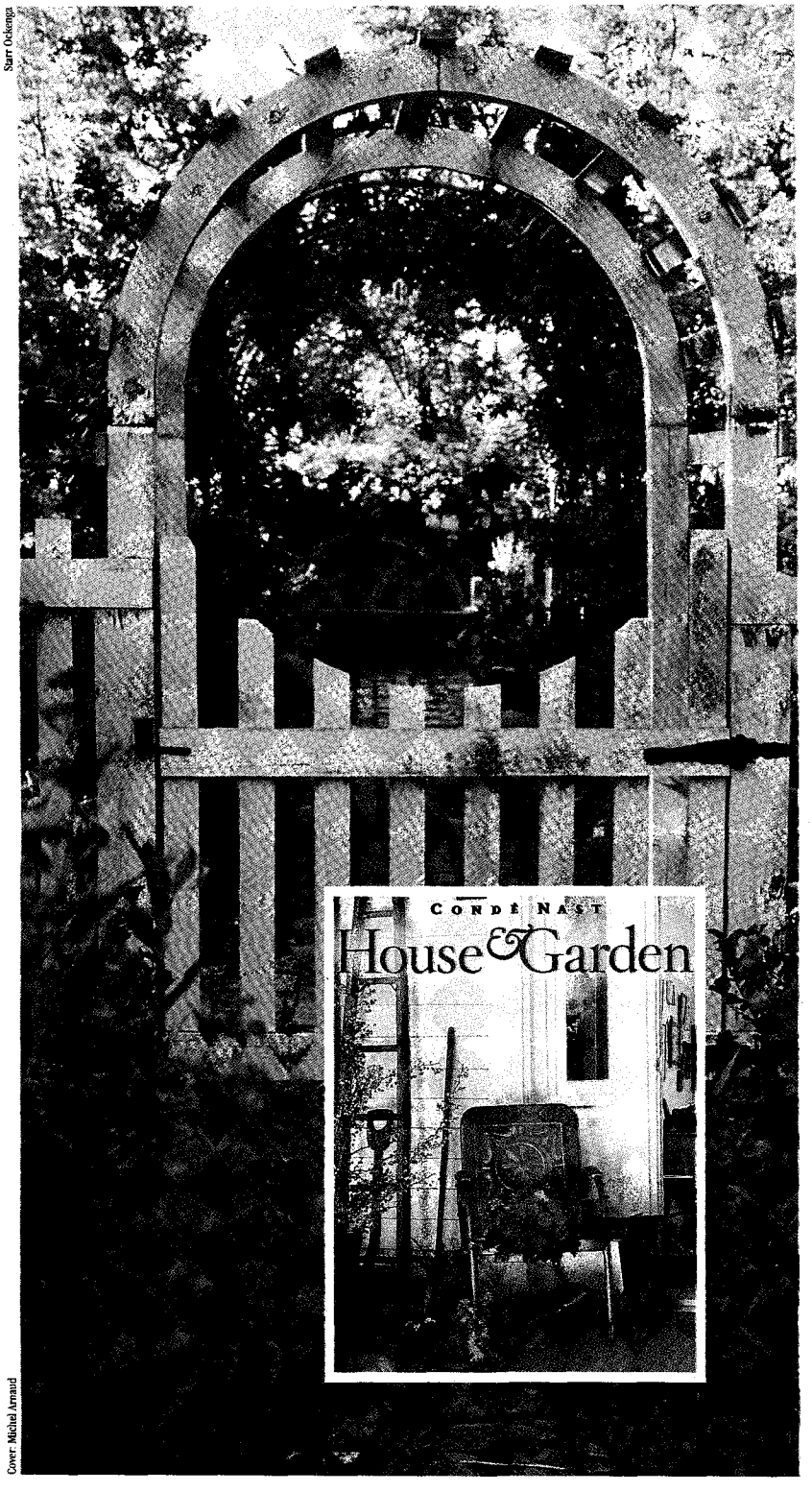

Starr Ockenga

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and Gerhard Richter. Through Aug. 2. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

"GAMES PEOPLE PLAY"—A hundred years of images from the New York City Parks Department's photo archives: nineteenth-century croquet, latter-day hoops, a 1968 giant Tinkertoy fest, a 1934 fedoraed checkers match. Through Sept. 13. (Arsenal Gallery, Fifth Ave. at 64th St. Open weekdays 9 to 4:30.)

"GUSTAV KLUTSIS: THE ARTIST AS AGITATOR, 1921-1936"—Photographs, posters, and sketches by one of the fathers of Russian photomontage. Through Aug. 16. (Schickler, 52 E. 76th St.)

"THE INSISTENT IMAGE"—A clutch of well-known photographs (with a few obscure pictures sprinkled in) by such blue-chip artists as Weston, Abbott, Watkins, Kertész, Cartier-Bresson, Steichen, and Lange. A smaller, more kinetic group of photographs from *Life* (by John Loengard, Mark Shaw, Elliott Erwitt, Robert Riger, and others) is in the back room. Through July 26. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

"PHOTOGRAVURE"—A survey of works made with the metal-plate printing process, from illustrations in *Camera Work* to examples by Rauschenberg, Clemente, Siskind, Ruscha, and Baldessari. Through July 26. (Marlborough Graphics, 40 W. 57th St.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—A mid-careers retrospective of works by the forty-year-old twins David and Peter Turnley, the Dynamic Duo of photojournalism. They both cover the major stories (Tiananmen Square, the Berlin Wall, the Gulf War, Bosnia), but David's long-term focus is South Africa and Eastern Europe, while Peter's has been refugee camps worldwide and the fall of Communism. Through Sept. 8. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

SHORT LIST—ANTHONY BARBOZA, Mann, 42 E. 76th St. Through Aug. 16. . . . BEVERLY BROWN, Felissimo, 10 W. 56th St. Open Saturdays, and Thursday evenings until 8; through July 13. . . . CARL CHIARENZA and STEPHAN BRIGIDI, Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Both shows through July 12. . . . ALBERT CHONG, Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St. Through July 20. . . . THOMAS JOSHUA COOPER, Sean Kelly, 43 Mercer St. Through July 19. . . . BRUCE CRATSLEY, A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. Open daily, 10 to midnight; through July 30. . . . RALPH GIBSON, Castelli, 420 West Broadway. Through July 26. . . . GEORGE PLATT LYNES, DC Moore, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. Through July 26. . . . PEDRO MEYER, Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Closed Mondays; open Saturdays; through Aug. 17. . . . FREDERIC OHRINGER, Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St. Through July 12. . . . SEBASTIANO PIRAS, Space Untitled, 135 Greene St. Open Sundays; through July 14.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim Museum, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the American Museum of Natural History.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

OPERA

NEW YORK GRAND OPERA—Verdi's eighth opera, "Alzira," enjoys a rare staging as the company continues its seven-year survey of the composer's work. Originally unveiled in Naples, in 1845, "Alzira" was not a success; following a few revivals, it failed to receive a single performance between 1858 and 1936. The title heroine, a sixteenth-century Incan princess (portrayed by soprano Cynthia Springsteen) is pledged as a political prize to the wicked Spanish governor (baritone Ping Yu) when she discovers that the Incan chief she once loved (tenor Edward Perretti) is not dead, as she had believed. The chief ends up bursting in on the wedding ceremony, where he heaps invective on Alzira and runs a knife through the Spaniard. But Alzira has had a civilizing influence on the governor (even though she loathes him), and with his dying breaths—long ones, it must be said—he graciously forgives his assassin and blesses the eventual marriage of the true lovers. Blame the plot on Voltaire, whose 1730 tragedy "Alzire, ou les Américains" served as the source for Verdi's librettist. Vincent La Selva conducts. (Central Park SummerStage, Rumsey Playfield, mid-Park at 72nd St. July 10 at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—In the first of this summer's free Parks Concerts, Eiji Oue conducts Mussorgsky's "Night on Bald Mountain," Stravinsky's "Firebird" Suite (1919 version), Strauss's "Don Juan," and Respighi's "The Pines of Rome." When it was premièred in 1924, "The Pines of Rome" made history—and outraged conservative critics—by including a phonograph among the orchestral instruments. In "The Pines of the Janiculum," the third of the work's four connected sections, the phonograph stirs into action playing a recording of a nightingale, which is accompanied by (live) muted strings and harp. Not being partial to the original-instrument movement, the Philharmonic will not employ a phonograph; instead, the nightingale will sing on magnetic tape. Since the piece falls at the end of the program, one suspects that the Park's avian community will be perplexed by the sudden outburst of birdsong after dark, the more so since a nightingale would be an interloper in these parts. (North Meadow, Central Park. July 16 at 8. For rain-date information, call 875-5709.)

MOSTLY MOZART—July 10: Gerard Schwarz conducts the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra in Gottfried Heinrich Stölzel's Concerto for Six Trumpets, as well as in Mozart's Sinfonia Concertante for Violin and Viola (with Itzhak Perlman and Pinchas Zukerman) and Symphony No. 41 (the "Jupiter"). . . . ¶ July 11: An all-Mozart program with pianist Claude Frank, clarinettist Richard Stolzman, and the Tokyo String Quartet. . . . ¶ July 12-13: Claus Peter Flor assumes the podium to lead Mozart's "Die Zauberflöte" Overture, F-Major Piano Concerto (K. 459, with Horacio Gutierrez), and Violin Concerto No. 5 (featuring Pamela Frank), as well as Schubert's Symphony No. 1. . . . ¶ July 15: Members of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center offer a program that includes Weber's B-Flat-Major Clarinet Quintet and Mozart's A-Major Piano Concerto (K. 414, here played in a chamber arrangement and featuring pianist Alicia de Larrocha). . . . ¶ July 16-17: Pinchas Zukerman doubles as conductor and violinist in a program that comprises Mozart's "Le Nozze di Figaro" Overture and Symphony No. 40, Bach's D-Minor Concerto for Two Violins, and Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto. Tricia Park assists in the Bach. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Evenings at 8.)

NAUMBURG ORCHESTRA—Lukas Foss leads Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 (with Tomohiro Okamura), Beethoven's Symphony No. 7, and a new work by Theodore Antoniou. (Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. July 11 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

GOLDMAN BAND—Gene Young conducts a pair of free concerts. (Seaside Park Bandshell, Asher Levy Park, Brooklyn. July 13 at 8. . . . ¶ Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center. July 14 at 7.)

RECITALS

AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS—Final events in the A.G.O.'s centennial convention. On July 10-11, recitals will be held throughout the day in many of the city's churches. (Call 935-9696 for specific information.) Organists tend to be well behaved as they fulfill their professional duties, but when they let loose, watch out. They will doubtless prove to be a vigorously interactive segment of the audience at the convention's closing event, a show at Radio City Music Hall hosted by the mischievous Peter Schickele. The lineup includes a performance of the "Little Pickle Book (Pöchelbüchlein)" by P. D. Q. Bach (Mr. Schickele's much maligned alter ego), a screening of the silent Gloria Swanson movie "Teddy at the Throttle" (with Lee Erwin improvising an accompaniment on the hall's organ—the only one in the city whose console is equipped with an altitude control), interludes played by David Messineo and David James, and a theatre piece called "The Mrs. Bach Show," starring comedienne Mary Lou Fallis. (247-4777. July 11 at 8:30.)

"WEDNESDAYS IN THE GARDEN"—A four-week chamber-music series in the garden of the Church of the Holy Trinity begins with music by Bach, Saint-Saëns, and Gershwin. (316 E. 88th St. July 10 at 7:30. No tickets necessary. In case of rain, the proceedings move inside to the parish hall.)

BARGEMUSIC—July 11 at 7:30 and July 14 at 4: Presenting music by Haydn, Mozart (his

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E-Flat-Major Divertimento, K. 563), and Fauré (his G-Minor Piano Quartet). . . . ¶ July 12 at 7:30: Original works and arrangements for brass quintet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061.)

Sunrise String Quartet—The newly formed foursome performs quartets by Haydn, Beethoven, and Tchaikovsky. (Landon Gallery, 1926 Broadway, at 64th St. 721-1716. July 12 at 7.)

Summergarden—This series' investigation of twentieth-century Parisian music continues with a variety of chamber works: Xenakis's "Rebonds," Eric Tanguy's "Musique pour Ming," Boulez's "Dérive I," Yves Prin's "Mobile 4b" (in the première of a new version), and Ravel's Sonata for Violin and Cello. (Sculpture Garden, Museum of Modern Art, 14 W. 54th St. July 12-13 at 8:30. No tickets necessary.)

High and Low—Soprano Elizabeth Henreckson-Farnum and double-bassist Paul Harris explore their respective repertoires. (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. July 14 at noon.)

Music from Aston Magna—The Massachusetts early-music center traipses into town with a program titled "The Humorous Mozart." Though he was rarely one to forgo a good joke (or a not-so-good one), Mozart tended not to write out musical chuckles as overtly as his friend Haydn did (opera excepted). But on a few occasions he did cross the line that separates a genial pleasantry from a belly laugh. The amusement will be divided among three works: the Divertimento in B-Flat Major (K. 287), the infrequently played "Pantalon and Columbine" (K. 446, a fragmentary commedia dell'arte pantomime the composer wrote for performance during Lent in 1783), and, of course, "A Musical Joke" (K. 522). (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. July 14 at 5. For information about tickets, call 1-800 875-7156.)

String Trios—Two works by Beethoven: his D-Major Serenade and his Trio in E-Flat Major (Op. 3). (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. July 14 at 6 and 8. No tickets necessary.)

Laura Bontrager and Pamela Goldberg—The cellist and the pianist perform music by Chopin and Schubert. (Mansfield Hotel, 12 W. 44th St. July 15 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Eric Himy—Pianist, performing music by Schubert, Liszt (his B-Minor Sonata), Scriabin, Debussy, and Ravel. (Frick Collection, 1 E. 70th St. 288-0700. July 16 at 5:45.)

OUT OF TOWN

Tanglewood—July 10 at 8:30: Chanticleer, the all-male vocal ensemble, performs a program of a-cappella music that ranges from Renaissance works by Dufay and Palestrina to recent compositions by Augusta Read Thomas, Bernard Rands, John Tavener, and Chen Yi (the group's composer-in-residence). . . . ¶ July 12 at 8:30: Seiji Ozawa conducts the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Bolcom's "MCMXC Tanglewood," Barber's Piano Concerto (featuring John Browning), and Strauss's "An Alpine Symphony." . . . ¶ July 13 at 8:30: Soprano Jessye Norman takes center stage for performances of Ravel's "Shéhérazade" and four songs from Berlioz's "Les Nuits d'Été." The Boston Symphony completes the program with Ravel's "Pavane for a Dead Princess" and Schoenberg's "Verklärte Nacht." Mr. Ozawa conducts. . . . ¶ July 14 at 2:30: Robert Spano leads the Tanglewood Music Center Orchestra in Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 2 (with Peter Serkin), Copland's "Short Symphony," and Stravinsky's "Firebird" Suite (1911). (Lenox, Mass. 1-413 637-5165.)

Caramoor—July 11 at 4:15: A recital by classical guitarist Ricardo Cobo. . . . ¶ July 12 at 8: The theremin was invented in 1920 by a weird character named Leon Theremin who, eighteen years later, would be kidnapped from his Manhattan studio by Stalin's secret police; back in his native Russia, he would become involved in espionage, invent the electronic eavesdropping bug, and dabble in further musical experiments (that is, until the Soviets decreed that electricity could not be used to create music). The theremin, which looks like a small writing desk with two antennas (one for pitch, the other for volume), was the first electronic instrument to make a serious impact on the musical world; its spooky wail, achieved by moving one's hands through the electromagnetic field surrounding the instrument, became a mainstay of science-fiction movies in the forties and fifties. Lucie Rosen, Caramoor's founder, was reputedly an accomplished thereminist in her day. Interest has waned since then, but Caramoor has done its founder proud by locating Lydia Kavina, from Moscow, the great-niece of the instrument's inventor, who instructed her personally for five years. In this recital, she'll perform two of her own compositions as well as Martinů's Phantasy for Theremin, Oboe, Piano, and Strings. A thereminless Mozart divertimento completes the program. . . . ¶ July 13 at 8:30: André Previn conducts the Orchestra of St. Luke's in an all-Mozart program: the Symphony No. 39, the concert aria "Ch'io mi scordi di te" (with soprano Ashley Putnam, and with Mr. Previn handling the obbligato piano part), an aria from "Idomeneo" (with Ms. Putnam), and the E-Flat-Major Piano Concerto (K. 271, the "Jeunehomme," featuring Emanuel Ax). . . . ¶ July 14 at 5:30: Violinists Eunice Lee and Jennifer Frautschi, violist Rebecca Young, cellist David Finckel, and Mr. Previn (as pianist) join for a program that comprises Brahms's E-Minor Cello Sonata, the première of Mr. Previn's Violin Sonata, and Mozart's G-Minor Piano Quartet. (Katonah, N.Y. 1-914 232-1252.)

Opera Festival of New Jersey—July 12 at 8 and July 14 at 2: "The Rake's Progress." . . . ¶ July 13 at 8: "La Traviata." (Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville, N.J. 1-609 936-1500.)

Glimmerglass Opera—July 13 at 8: "Lizzie Borden," by Jack Beeson. . . . ¶ July 14 at 2: "Don Pasquale." (Cooperstown, N.Y. 1-607 547-2255.)

Maverick Concerts—The Shanghai String Quartet performs quartets by Hovhaness (his First), Mozart (in F Major, K. 590), and Beethoven (in C Major, Op. 59, No. 3). (Woodstock, N.Y. 1-914 679-8217. July 14 at 3.)

Music Mountain—The Miami String Quartet plays quartets by Haydn (in A Major, Op. 20, No. 6) and Eduardo Diazmuñoz, as well as Dohnányi's C-Minor Piano Quintet (with Alan Chow assisting). (Falls Village, Conn. For information, call 1-860 824-7126. July 14 at 3.)

Southern belles lettres: the Lady Chablis reads at A Different Light Bookstore.

LEROY "KING OF ART"

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Feminine Mystique—Since her brief appearance in John Berendt's bestseller, "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," the Lady Chablis has been popping up in some major places, where she is always well contoured and often televised. "I always told myself that if I ever made it to Oprah, honey, I've made it to the top," the full-time female impersonator confessed in a recent phone conversation. Now she has co-authored her autobiography, "Hiding My Candy," and Thursday she makes a local stop on her national reading tour. "Well, the publishing company considers it a reading tour," she says. "I consider it entertaining. I just became a writer. But I was entertaining long before that." (A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. July 15 at 7. No tickets necessary.)

Get Hooked—When it began, in 1946, at the Lake in Prospect Park, the A&S Fishing Contest drew twenty to thirty kids, lured there by a fish fry and by the rods, reels, and two-wheelers that went to the winners. Half a century has passed since that golden Opie-and-Andy moment; the contest has endured and grown, sponsorship has fallen to Macy's, and still the folks at Prospect Park are doing their piscatorial part. This year's prizes include a trip to the waters off Long Island to fish the running of the blues; but more crucial than winning, of course, is the chance for city kids to learn the finer points of bait fishing from their granddads. Or, perhaps, grandmoms: Geraldine Cox, who won the contest in 1953 and then discussed her strategy on WNYC, still contends that she hauled in her prize-winning fish (it weighed about a pound, and she thinks it was a carp) using bread dough for bait. "I refused to put the worm on," she declares. (Prospect Park, Brooklyn. July 12-13 and July 16-20, from 10 to 2. For more information, call 1-718 287-3400.)

Swing Sets—Big bands bring the ballroom out of the dance halls and onto the Plaza at Lincoln Center, in the opening week of Midsummer Night Swing. The partnering starts at 8:15, Wednesdays through Saturdays, through August 10. To help you find your footing, there are dance lessons Wednesdays through Fridays at 6:30. July 10: The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra takes the stage for a night of classic swing. . . . ¶ July 11: Cowboy fiddler Johnny Gimble joins Too Much Fun for Western swing. . . . ¶ July 12: Ray Sepulveda y Su Orquesta mix merengue and salsa. . . . ¶ July 13: The Loren Schoenberg Big Band. (Tickets available on the evening of the event.)

Readings—July 10 at 7: Novelist Richard Hell ("Go Now") and short-story writer Stokes Howell ("The Sexual Life of Savages") read from their work. (KGB, 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ July 10 at 7: Susan Isaacs reads from her recent novel, "Lily White." (Shakespeare & Co., Lexington Ave. at 68th St. No tickets necessary.)

Talks—July 13 at 4: Elizabeth Knight sets out gingerbread and tea (iced, colloquially) as she explains the punctilios of high tea. (Barnes & Noble, 33 E. 17th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ July 16 at 6: Linda Lynton unveils the meanings behind the patterns in traditional saris; and Ramaa Raghavan tells stories from Hindu mythology, using the Bharata Natyam style of dance. (Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St. No tickets necessary.)

Walk—July 14 at 1:30: Howard Goldberg of Adventure on a Shoestring paces off the Millionaire's Mile, from 59th Street up the next twenty park-view blocks of Fifth Avenue. For more information, call 265-2663.

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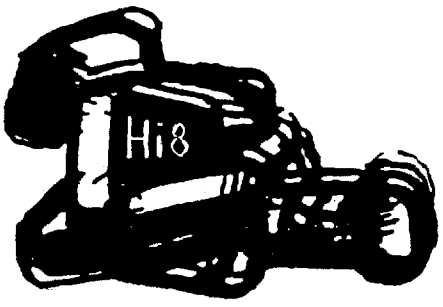

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Courage Under Fire—A drama about soldiers in the Gulf War, starring Denzel Washington and Meg Ryan. Written by Patrick Sheane Duncan; directed by Edward Zwick. Opening July 12.

Harriet the Spy—Reviewed below in Current Films. Opening July 10.

The Visitors—Twelfth-century knights land in present-day France, in a comedy directed by Jean-Marie Poiré. With Jean Reno, Christian Clavier, and Valérie Lemercier. Written by the director and Clavier. In French. Opening July 12. (Cinema II.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre information is listed on page 22.)

The Cable Guy—At last, a blip in the career of Jim Carrey—not something one would wish for (his talents are much too bendy and unpredictable), but something that was always waiting to happen. What's finally tripped him up is a bitter little movie that seems to want to be a comedy but can't make up its mind. Meagre of plot and low of mood, it stars Carrey as a technician who installs cable in the apartment of a lonely young man (Matthew Broderick) who has just split up with his girlfriend. They become friends, although only at the insistence of the cable guy; the tone drifts toward the homoerotic and back again, settling in the end for a straight stalker plot. Ben Stiller, the director, flirts with a variety of ideas without having the heart to see them through; the initial suspicion of television, for instance, simply fades from the movie. Maybe Stiller used up all his energy trying to cope with Carrey, who is more or less out of control. He certainly knows how to perform, so what's he doing in a picture that requires him to act?—A.L. (7/8/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, Criterion Center, Gemini, Lincoln Square, Orpheum VII, and Village Theatre VII.)

Cold Comfort Farm—John Schlesinger's eccentric rural comedy is based on a 1932 novel by Stella Gibbons. The bright, sophisticated young heroine, Flora Poste (Kate Beckinsale), goes to live with obscure relatives in Sussex, and, appalled by their ignorance and their dour inertia, sets out to change their stubborn ways; she's Jeeves in skirts, subverting the blind workings of Fate to her own ends. Beckinsale keeps her composure while veteran character actors—Eileen Atkins, Sheila Burrell, Stephen Fry, Freddie Jones, Joanna Lumley, and Ian McKellen—attempt to dazzle her, and us, with their virtuosity. Schlesinger, working from a script by Malcolm Bradbury, maintains a steady rhythm and a light, cheerful mood.—T.R. (5/13/96) (First & 62nd Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, and Regency.)

Eraser—Arnold Schwarzenegger stars as John Kruger, a marshal with the Federal Witness-Protection Program. Anyone worried that the role sounds, by Schwarzenegger standards, rather sober and responsible will be relieved to learn that it consists largely of shooting alligators and falling out of a plane without a parachute. Kruger's mission is to protect Lee Cullen (Vanessa Williams), who knows something she shouldn't about illegal arms sales. As directed by Charles Russell, the movie is about as visually undistinguished as a major feature can be; purists will especially admire the shampoo-commercial quality of the forest-glade scene. The plot is scarcely more sophisticated, with various allies turning out, wholly predictably, to be traitors. Although the film should be a downer, it tumbles along with a kind of parodic glee, like a greatest-hits compilation from every thriller of the past few years—it even brings in a bunch of Mafia heavies to spice up the climax. With James Coburn and James Caan, one of whom is the villain.—A.L. (7/8/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, New York Twin, Olympia, Orpheum VII, State, and Village Theatre VII.)

Opening July 12, Edward Zwick's "Courage Under Fire."

ROBERT ANDREW PARKER

Harriet the Spy—Louise Fitzhugh's strange, beloved 1964 novel for children, about a precocious eleven-year-old who trains herself to become a writer by spying on people, is even harder than most books to transfer to the screen. Its themes—the lonely struggle to become an artist, the half-understood trauma of adolescence, the morally ambiguous pleasures of voyeurism—are mostly internal. And the Manhattan of cocktail parties, doormen, and nannies which the book chronicles seems, by today's standards, both quaint and undemocratic. So, in this adaptation, Harriet (Michelle Trachtenberg) hangs around with a multicultural rainbow of buddies, dances to loud, cheerful rap music, and lives (apparently) in Toronto (that's where the movie was filmed)—which is sort of like sending Holden Caulfield to mope in Seattle coffeehouses. Given these dubious choices, it's not so bad, especially in the second half, when the director,

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Bronwen Hughes, finally tones things down and starts getting to the story's very serious charm. With Rosie O'Donnell, who plays Harriet's rather mysterious nanny, Ole Golly, as a supportive standup comic.—S.K. (East 85th Street, Embassy 4, Lincoln Square, New York Twin, 19th Street East 6, and Waverly.)

Heavy—The hero of James Mangold's low-budget independent film is a fat, balding, terribly shy man named Victor (Pruitt Taylor Vince), who makes pizzas at an upstate New York roadhouse owned by his mother (Shelley Winters). In a more conventional picture the sight of a middle-aged sad sack living with Shelley Winters would be enough to send viewers sprinting for the exits, but Mangold (who also wrote the script) establishes a mood that dispels the possibility of either pathos or hysteria. He's alert to the lived-in beauties of the upstate landscape, and his images have a restrained, laconic lyricism that captures both the romantic lushness and the gray loneliness of the setting. This is a little-people movie that's modest in the right way: it's less interested in striking attitudes toward its disappointed characters than in simply observing the texture of life in their particular nowhere. Also with Liv Tyler, Deborah Harry, and Evan Dando. Cinematography by Michael Barrow.—T.R. (6/17/96) (Film Forum.)

The Horseman on the Roof—Jean-Paul Rappeneau's costume picture stars Olivier Martinez as Angelo, an Italian on the run in the Provence of the eighteen-thirties. The grand plot turns on a cholera outbreak; Angelo has to rush from one disaster area to the next, doing good works while trying to evade the dastardly Austrians pursuing him. Finally he descends from a roof into the house of a woman so pale, mysterious, and desirable that she can, under French law, be played only by Juliette Binoche. The actress does a fine job, but the fact that the suffering couple are doomed never to consummate their passion—she's looking for her *husband*, of all people—says it all about the movie's weak nerve. In French.—A.L. (6/10/96) (Quad Cinema.)

The Hunchback of Notre Dame—After "Aladdin" and "The Lion King," Disney's new animated offering, directed by Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise, feels rather sombre and, well, hunched. The design, as befits the Victor Hugo tale, has a Gothic sharpness and thrust, and younger children may, if all goes according to plan, freak out at the underground chambers stuffed with bones. It's hard to open your heart to Quasimodo (voiced by Tom Hulce), whose misfortune is not so much the malformation of his body as the hideously cute grin that mars his face. Esmeralda's lines are spoken by Demi Moore, who appears to have been the inspiration for the heroine's features and figure as well. A two-dimensional Moore is arguably more animated than the standard three-dimensional model, but the character is still too glutinous to be much fun. As invariably happens in Disney productions, the heart-warming mush proves no competition for the murkier details; what gives the film some depth, and makes it a weird choice for a family outing, is Frollo (spoken by Tony Jay), the cathedral bigwig who not only has the hots for Esmeralda but insists on singing about them at great length. What will Disney adapt next? "Tropic of Cancer"?—A.L. (7/8/96) (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema II, Cinema 3rd Avenue, 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 1, Lincoln Square, Metro Cinema, and Village Theatre VII.)

Independence Day—Will Smith, Bill Pullman, and Jeff Goldblum save the world from invading aliens in a thriller directed by Roland Emmerich, who co-wrote the screenplay with Dean Devlin. (Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema.) (Chelsea Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Lincoln Square, Olympia, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 34th St. East, Village East Cinemas, and Ziegfeld.)

I Shot Andy Warhol—The story of Valerie Solanas (Lili Taylor), the deranged woman who, in 1968, ambushed Warhol at the Factory and nearly killed him. The director, Mary Harron, tries to depict Solanas as a complex, tragicomic figure, but the protagonist can't bear the weight that the film puts on her, and Taylor's monotonous performance doesn't do much to lighten the load. The languid-hysterical Factory atmosphere feels accurate, though, and so does Jared Harris's witty portrayal of Warhol. Also with Stephen Dorff (as Candy Darling), Michael Imperioli (Ondine), and Donovan Leitch (Gerard Malanga).—T.R. (5/13/96) (Angelika Film Center.)

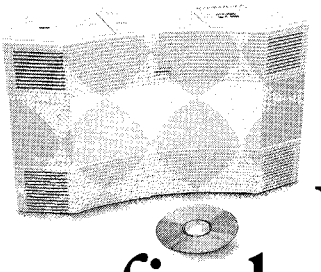
Lone Star—A fine and fraught movie from the writer-director John Sayles, which boasts the same knotted narrative style as his earlier "City of Hope" but a more pressing melancholy and a keener sense of place. The setting is Frontera, a small Texas town on the Mexican border, once policed by Sheriff Buddy Deeds (Matthew McConaughey) and now overseen by his son, Sam (Chris Cooper). Sayles shifts between the two eras with gracious ease, linking them with an old crime—the unsolved and unmourned killing of Buddy's predecessor, Charley Wade (Kris Kristofferson), who held sway through bigotry and corruption. Thanks to Kristofferson's scary and unyielding performance, the murder mystery becomes the core of the film. Elsewhere you can sense the strain as Sayles works away at the generation gaps, introducing an Army colonel (Joe Morton) and a local schoolteacher (Elizabeth Peña) who are both bowed down with family problems. By the end, though, you're grateful for the movie's weight and substance (rare virtues in a flimsy summer); you feel that you've been put through something serious, not just taken for a ride.—A.L. (7/8/96) (Angelika Film Center, Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, and 68th St. Playhouse.)

Maybe . . . Maybe Not—Absolutely not. Sönke Wortmann tries to bring Hollywood lightness to German film in this comedy about a philanderer named Axel who gets kicked out by his girlfriend and ends up crashing with a gay man, and the result combines Neil Simon's corniest plotting and Billy Wilder's cheapest cynicism, without either one's gift for a gag. The rather obvious contemporary twist is that it's the gorgeous, blond Axel (Til Schweiger), and not a woman, who becomes everyone's love object, but once this is established Wortmann doesn't have much to say. The heterosexuals are selfish and uninteresting, and most of the gays are hysterical hams. The only likable character is the lonely gay man (Joachim Krol) who takes Axel in; with his superior acting Krol suggests that there's a new category of people—decent gay men—for straight hunks to prey on. In German—S.K. (Angelika Film Center and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

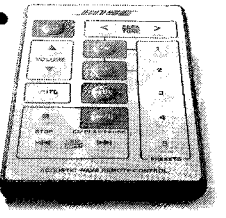
Mission: Impossible—This action blockbuster's obvious selling points are nostalgia for the long-running TV series and the presence of a big star, Tom Cruise, but the real star here is the director, Brian De Palma. His elegant, baroque, multilayered style is so perfectly suited to the material that even the most blatant commercial strategies of David Koepp and Robert Towne's screenplay somehow wind up playing to his strengths. Also with Jon Voight, Emmanuelle Béart, Ving Rhames, and Vanessa Redgrave.—T.R. (6/3/96) (Astor Plaza, 84th Street Sixplex, Metro Cinema, Orpheum VII, 72nd Street East, 34th Street Showplace, and Village Theatre VII.)

Nelly and Monsieur Arnaud—The latest demonstration of Parisian decorum from the French director Claude Sautet. Nelly (Emmanuelle Béart) leaves her marriage and goes to work for Arnaud (Michel Serrault), a former judge who is writing his memoirs. The two tiptoe toward love, then pull back. The movie is played (as you would expect) with watchful finesse, particularly by the morose and sardonic Serrault, but you sometimes long for a little wildness; Béart's character should be driving men crazy, but what does she do? She *interests* them. In French.—A.L. (4/22/96) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Nutty Professor—Eddie Murphy's talents seemed to have seized up or turned sour in his recent movies. But the star brings some fresh-



Small as it is, we managed to find room for improvement.



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ness to this new twist on the old Jerry Lewis comedy, playing numerous roles without turning the picture into a hymn to himself. He stars first as Klump, a science teacher of vast proportions and surprising sweetness—hardly nutty at all. The nut is Buddy Love, the chattering womanizer into whom Klump is transformed by a gene-restructuring potion. Buddy is concentrated Murphy: it's as if the actor were laying out his own performance for inspection and realizing that it falls short—Klump is the one who gets the girl. The war between gentleness and mania lends muscle to what is, for the most part, an exuberant gross-out; the gags start at "Animal House" level and work downward, and the director, Tom Shadyac, doesn't so much pace the film as try to keep up with the unstoppable riffs of his star, who for good (if outsize) measure plays most of Klump's family, too. The makeup and special effects are a blast, especially at the finale, in which Klump and Buddy wrestle for possession of a single body.—A.L. (7/8/96) (Art Greenwich Twin, Baronet, Coronet, Lincoln Square, National Twin, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and 34th Street Showplace.)

A Perfect Candidate—American political campaigns have become a hollow battle between behind-the-scenes image-makers: that's the message of this enjoyable but finally cynical and opportunistic documentary by R. J. Cutler (producer of "The War Room") and David Van Taylor about the 1994 Virginia Senate race, in which the Republican, Oliver North, attempted to unseat the Democratic incumbent, Charles Robb. Each candidate struggles to shake off a bad reputation, North's because of Iran-Contra, Robb's because of allegations that he's consorted with bimbos; the film is structured like a backstage look at actors in rehearsal, the idea—not a very deep or new one—being that politics is show business. Robb looks like a shady Elmer Fudd as he forgets where he stands on issues, tries desperately to interact with common people in a grocery store, and loses his train of thought in the debate. North, on the other hand, could be a movie star: playing to the camera like a cross between John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart, he comes off as a wrongly maligned homespun patriot.—S.K. (Quad Cinema.)

Phenomenon—Scientology hasn't improved Tom Cruise's acting much, but his fellow practitioner John Travolta certainly seems to be on a roll. Here Travolta plays George Malley, a regular-guy auto mechanic in rural California who looks up into the sky on his thirty-seventh birthday and is embraced by an intense light. Suddenly he's a genius, decoding secret Air Force messages, turning pig manure into fuel, and slowly, persistently winning the heart of Lace, a reclusive single mother (Kyra Sedgwick). The movie looks a lot like Scientology dressed up with junky Biblical overtones—in the generically Edenic landscape, and in the big love scene, in which, after the townspeople have turned their backs on George, Lace shaves him and washes his hair. Still, until the dénouement—a tearjerking piece of hagiography—it's surprisingly enjoyable. And Travolta, like George, works at a level exponentially higher than that of anyone else: his performance, a tour de force of clarity, conviction, economy of effort, and focussed will, is pretty close to genius. With Forest Whitaker and Robert Duvall as his apostles. Written by Gerald DiPego; Jon Turtletaub ("While You Were Sleeping") directed.—S.K. (Chelsea Cinemas, Cinema I, 84th Street Sixplex, Guild, Murray Hill Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

The Postman—Antonio Skármeta's bittersweet 1985 novel, "Burning Patience," on which this movie is loosely based, told the story of Mario, a lonely postman who delivers mail to Pablo Neruda in Isla Negra, the corner of Chile where the poet spent much of his later life. In Michael Radford's lovely but sanitized version, the action has been moved to picturesque Italy. As Neruda, the great Philippe Noiret somehow conquers being dubbed in Spanish-accented Italian; as Mario, the late Italian comedian Massimo Troisi is painfully affecting. In Italian.—S.K. (Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

The Rock—In Michael Bay's long, sadistic, and aggressively stupid action movie, Sean Connery and Nicolas Cage break into Alcatraz to dislodge a group of terrorists—commanded by Ed Harris—who have occupied the island and have aimed missiles filled with deadly nerve gas at San Francisco. The picture, which was produced by Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer (the team responsible for "Flashdance" and "Top Gun"), is designed to provide non-stop mindless fun, like a "Die Hard" movie, but Bay's manic, rhythmless direction turns the action sequences into incoherent spasms of violence. And there's not much pleasure in watching three resourceful actors doing time in a Simpson-Bruckheimer production; by the end, they all look like broken men. Also with Michael Biehn, William Forsythe, and John Spencer.—T.R. (6/17/96) (84th Street Sixplex, 86th Street East Twin, Embassy 2, Embassy 3, Murray Hill Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Olympia, Sutton, and Village East Cinemas.)

Stealing Beauty—Bernardo Bertolucci's new picture is set in the Tuscan countryside outside Siena, which the director rescues from lingering prettiness with some startling, impatient editing. Liv Tyler plays the teen-age heroine, Lucy, who comes to a villa full of languid expatriates—among them a sculptor (Donal McCann) and a dying playwright (Jeremy Irons)—where she will lose her virginity and find out who her real father is. Neither of these events is surprising, let alone gripping, and the film slowly dwindles into a record of the rich at play—poolside Henry James. The screenplay, brittle and precious, is by Bertolucci and Susan Minot.—A.L. (6/10/96) (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, and Lincoln Square.)

Striptease—Carl Hiaasen's funny, sexy novel about a stripper involved in a custody battle that leads to a murder has been adapted by director Andrew Bergman into a comedy vehicle for Demi Moore, and the result is mediocre. Bergman, whose light comic touch has buoyed performances by Marlon Brando (in "The Freshman") and Nicolas Cage (in "Honeymoon in Vegas"), has shaped his script around the gym-bunny body of Moore, but her performance is brittle and clipped, with a Candice Bergen feel, as though comedy were a yoke around her neck. There are some good bits, and such actors as Burt Reynolds, Ving Rhames, and Robert Patrick deliver the comic goods in character parts. But Moore, for all her bumping and grinding, never heats the audience up. She strips, but she's too passive to be a tease.—B.D. (Criterion Center, Gemini, Lincoln Square, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Village East Cinemas.)

Vive L'Amour—An interesting film—with both the promise and the limitations that that word implies. The backdrop is Taipei, an overbuilt, arid hive of glass and steel, in which the three main characters hold down heavily symbolic jobs: May (Yang Kuei-Mei) sells real estate, Ah-Jung (Chen Chao-Jung) is a transient street vendor, and Hsiao-Kang (Lee Kang-Sheng) sells drawer space in a crematorium. The plot, to the extent that there is one, begins when May accidently leaves the keys in the door of a large, unoccupied apartment that she's trying to sell, and Ah-Jung and Hsiao-Kang independently sneak in. Occasionally they run into each other, but this is a movie about anomie and solitude, so most of the time they're alone—taking baths, turning cartwheels, contemplating suicide, and masturbating. The memorable and often funny images begin, after a while, to seem voyeuristic and cruel. Written and directed by Tsai Ming-Liang—who betrays the film's latent self-importance by ending it with his signature in the lower-right-hand corner. In Mandarin.—S.K. (Angelika 57 and Quad Cinema.)

Welcome to the Dollhouse—Todd Solondz's low-budget independent movie pitilessly chronicles the indignities visited on an unpopular seventh grader by her vicious classmates and her grotesque family. The picture wallows in the details of her daily persecution without ever quite settling on a coherent attitude toward it. As the film grinds on, it grows steadily nastier and more hysterical: in one scene near the end, the filmmaker actually ridicules a mother's grief at the kidnapping of her youngest child.—T.R. (5/27/96) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Square.)

ALSO PLAYING

Angels & Insects (reviewed in our issue of 1/29/96): Lincoln Plaza Cinemas and Quad Cinema. . . . **Antonia's Line:** Cinema 3 and Quad Cinema. . . . **Dead Man Walking** (1/8/96): Manhattan Twin. . . . **Fargo** (3/25/96): First & 62nd Cinemas, Quad Cinema, 62nd & Broadway, and 23rd St. West Triplex. . . . **Flirting with Disaster** (4/15/96): Lincoln Plaza Cinemas. . . . **Mighty Aphrodite** (10/30/95): 59th Street East Cinema. . . . **Purple Noon:** Paris. . . . **Toy Story:** Manhattan Twin. . . . **Twister** (5/20/96): Criterion Center and Gemini. . . . **Who Killed Pasolini?:** Film Forum.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

(For show times, call 777-FILM, except where noted.)

Angelika 57, *225* W. 57th St.
Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at Broadway.
Baronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Beekman, Second Ave. at 66th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, Seventh Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
Cinema I, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema II, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3rd Avenue, Third Ave. at 60th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Coronet, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Criterion Center, Broadway at 44th St.
East 85th Street, First Ave. at 85th St.
Eastside Playhouse, Third Ave. at 55th St.
84th Street Sixplex, Broadway at 84th St.
86th Street East Twin, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Embassy I, Broadway at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, Seventh Ave. at 47th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Film Forum, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini, Second Ave. at 64th St.
Gotham Cinema, Third Ave. at 58th St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, Broadway at 63rd St. (757-2280).
Lincoln Square, Broadway at 68th St.
Manhattan Twin, Third Ave. at 59th St.
Metro Cinema I and 2, Broadway at 99th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
National Twin, Broadway at 44th St.
New York Twin, Second Ave. at 67th St.
19th Street East 6, Broadway at 19th St.
Olympia I and II, Broadway at 107th St.
Orpheum VII, Third Ave. at 86th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Regency, Broadway at 67th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
68th St. Playhouse, Third Ave. at 68th St.
72nd Street East, Third Ave. at 71st St.
State, Broadway at 45th St.
Sutton I and 2, Third Ave. at 57th St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
Village East Cinemas, Second Ave. at 12th St.
Village Theatre VII, Third Ave. at 11th St.
Waverly I and 2, Sixth Ave. at 3rd St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between Eighth and Ninth Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.

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REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

The Band Wagon (1953)—There have been few screen musicals as good as this one, starring those two great song-and-dance men Fred Astaire and Jack Buchanan. The plot, about a movie star (Astaire) trying for a comeback on Broadway and falling in love with a ballerina (Cyd Charisse), is a relaxed excuse for a series of urbane revue numbers, which culminates in the "Girl Hunt" dance sequence—a parody of Mickey Spillane's bloody boudoir fiction. When the bespangled Charisse wraps her phenomenal legs around Astaire, she can be forgiven everything, even her three minutes of "classical" ballet and the fact that she reads her lines as if she learned them phonetically. With Oscar Levant, in one of his best movie roles, and Nanette Fabray. Directed by Vincente Minnelli; script by Betty Comden and Adolph Green; songs by Howard Dietz and Arthur Schwartz.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; July 16.)

Cisco Pike (1971)—Though it was Kris Kristofferson's first picture, he's at his ease. A former pop idol, Cisco hangs around the L.A. music business trying to find the comeback trail, but, after two convictions for dealing, he knows the bottom, too. Gene Hackman plays a narcotics agent; enraged and cracking up, he confiscates a hundred kilos of top-grade marijuana and blackmails Cisco into dealing it in two and a half days. The picture catches the high-risk glee and the sense of invulnerability of dealers who get high on dealing itself. Cisco's scroungy little transactions turn him on as if he'd just sold the world to the highest bidder; he digs his triumphs—the excitement brings him to life. Bill L. Norton, the twenty-seven-year-old writer-director, wrote an original script for his directing début, then got some help; Robert Towne did a major rewrite. Karen Black plays Cisco's girl, and does it straight, without a wasted motion; Viva, looking like a stoned, weirdly benign bird of prey, plays a rich girl he encounters while he's crashing around the city.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; July 10-11.)

The Magnificent Ambersons (1942)—Working from the Booth Tarkington novel, Orson Welles achieved some great sequences of family life—intense, harrowing squabbles. Tim Holt plays the arrogant, mother-fixated son who falls from the American aristocracy to the working class; Dolores Costello, the fragile blond beauty of the silent era, is his soft, yielding mother; and, as the nervous, bitter hysterical-spinster aunt, Agnes Moorehead is uncannily powerful, in a hyperrealistic way. The film wasn't completed in the form that Welles originally intended, and there are pictorial effects that seem scaled for a much fuller work, but even in this truncated form it's amazing and memorable.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; July 11 and July 13.)

Once Upon a Time in the West (1969)—Zesty Claudia Cardinale is the woman who owns a watering hole near the first transcontinental railroad; Henry Fonda is the sleek, flinty-eyed bad man who tries to drive her off; Jason Robards is the grungy outlaw who defends her; and the electrically laconic Charles Bronson is the mysterious Man with the Harmonica. In this Sergio Leone epic, their glowering star presence holds the camera even with Monument Valley as competition. The conquest of space—a hidden theme in Leone's early films—emerges here full force. Leone tracks beyond the railroad and captures the heroes and villains in outsize closeups. His imagery combines with Ennio Morricone's score and the peerless actors to make this the ne plus ultra of spaghetti Westerns: the Iron Horse Opera.—M.S. (Film al Fresco; July 14.)

Les Parents Terribles (1949)—One of Jean Cocteau's two or three greatest films, and one of the finest examples of group acting ever photographed. He took his play about the disorderly, unpredictable parents (Marcel André and Yvonne de Bray) who cannot accept the fact that their son (Jean Marais) is growing up and re-created it for the screen with such skill that a true claustrophobic family atmosphere is achieved. In structure, this is a coincidence-ridden boulevard comedy, but Cocteau lifts it to the realm of tragicomic Oedipal fable. In French.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; July 14-15.)

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, W. Houston St. west of Sixth Ave. (727-8110)—Films made in Hollywood between 1969 and 1975. July 10-11: "Dusty Garden" (1956, Luis Buñuel). . . . July 16 at 2: "Douce" (1943, Claude Autant-Lara). . . . July 16 at 4: "Gervaise" (1956, René Clément). . . . ¶ July 11 at 6:30: "Garbage" (1995, Peter Byck). . . . ¶ July 13-14 at 2: "Wonder Man" (1945, H. Bruce Humberstone). . . . ¶ July 13 at 4: "Sátántangó" (1994, Béla Tarr).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—Films directed by Jack Hill. July 13 at 2: "Foxy Brown" (1974). . . . July 13 at 4: "Pit Stop" (1969). . . . July 14 at 2: "Spider Baby" (1968). . . . July 14 at 4: "Switchblade Sisters" (1975).

Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—July 16 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "The Rules of the Game" (1939, Jean Renoir; in French), with Marcel Dalio and Nora Gregor.

At MOMA, Cyd Charisse and Fred Astaire in "The Band Wagon."

HERVÉ BLONDON

and Sweets McGee" (1971, Floyd Mutrux) and "Cisco Pike" (†). . . . July 12-14: "Husbands" (1970, John Cassavetes). . . . July 15: "Diary of a Mad Housewife" (1970, Frank Perry) and "Wanda" (1971, Barbara Loden). . . . July 16: "The Panic in Needle Park" (1971, Jerry Schatzberg) and "Puzzle of a Downfall Child" (1970, Schatzberg).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St. (924-3363)—Through July 11: "Two-Lane Blacktop" (1971, Monte Hellman). . . . From July 12: "In the Realm of the Senses" (1977, Nagisa Oshima; in Japanese).

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A showing of films from the museum's Martin Scorsese Collection. July 11 at 2:30 and July 14 at 5: "Macbeth" (1948, Orson Welles). . . . July 11 at 6 and July 13 at 1: "The Magnificent Ambersons" (†). . . . July 11 at 8 and July 14 at 3: "The Third Man" (1950, Carol Reed). . . . July 12 at 2:30 and July 13 at 5: "Monsieur Verdoux" (1947, Charlie Chaplin). . . . July 12 at 6 and July 14 at 1: "The Strange Woman" (1946, Edgar G. Ulmer). . . . July 12 at 8 and July 13 at 3: "Small Back Room" (1949, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger). . . . July 15 at 2:30: "The Phenix City Story" (1955, Phil Karlson). . . . July 15 at 6: "East Side, West Side" (1949, Mervyn Le Roy). . . . July 16 at 2:30: "Carmen Jones" (1954, Otto Preminger). . . . July 16 at 6: "The Band Wagon" (†).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—A program of French films based on French novels, plays, or short stories. July 10 at 2 and 6:15: "Le Plaisir" (1952, Max Ophuls). . . . July 10 at 4 and 8:15: "Madame Bovary" (1991, Claude Chabrol). . . . July 11 at 2 and 9 and July 12 at 4 and 8:15: "La Princesse de Clèves" (1961, Jean Delannoy). . . . July 11 at 4 and July 12 at 2 and 6:15: "Les Liaisons Dangereuses" (1960, Roger Vadim). . . . July 14 at 4 and 8 and July 15 at 2 and 6: "Les Parents Terribles" (†). . . . July 14 at 6:15 and July 15 at 4 and 8: "Death in the Garden" (1956, Luis Buñuel). . . . July 16 at 2: "Douce" (1943, Claude Autant-Lara). . . . July 16 at 4: "Gervaise" (1956, René Clément). . . . ¶ July 11 at 6:30: "Garbage" (1995, Peter Byck). . . . ¶ July 13-14 at 2: "Wonder Man" (1945, H. Bruce Humberstone). . . . ¶ July 13 at 4: "Sátántangó" (1994, Béla Tarr).

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—A series of Italian films. July 12 at 6 and July 13 at 2: "Padre Padrone" (1977, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani). . . . July 13 at 7: "La Notte" (1962, Michelangelo Antonioni). . . . July 13 at 9:45: "Voyage to Italy" (1953, Roberto Rossellini). . . . ¶ July 14 at 6: A program of short films by Saul Levine.

Bryant Park, Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.—Mondays, starting at dusk: free drive-in-style moviegoing, beginning with Looney Tunes, coming attractions, and newsreels. The feature on July 15 will be "The Seven Year Itch" (1955, Billy Wilder), with Marilyn Monroe and Tom Ewell. (Rain date is the following night.)

Film al Fresco, at Le Madri Restaurant, 168 W. 18th St. (727-8022)—Sunday evenings, more films out-of-doors, with food and live music beginning at 6 and the movie starting at about 8:30. On July 14, the feature will be "Once Upon a Time in the West" (†). (Rain date is the following night.)

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On July 14 at 7, the feature will be "Blonde Venus" (1932, Josef von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich.

Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—"Karaoke" and "Cold Lazarus," the final works by writer Dennis Potter (1935-94), are being shown at the museum on a rotating basis. July 11-12 at 6 and July 13-14 at 2: "Cold Lazarus" (1996, Renny Rye), with Albert Finney.

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St. (423-3500)—A program of African films. July 10 at 3: "I Am the Future" (1994, Godwin Mawuru; Zimbabwe). . . . July 16 at 3: "The Body Beautiful" (1991, Ngozi Onwurah; Nigeria) and "Fire Eyes" (1993, Soraya Mire; Somalia). . . . July 16 at 6:30: "Child of the Terraces" (1990, Ferid Boughedir; Tunisia).

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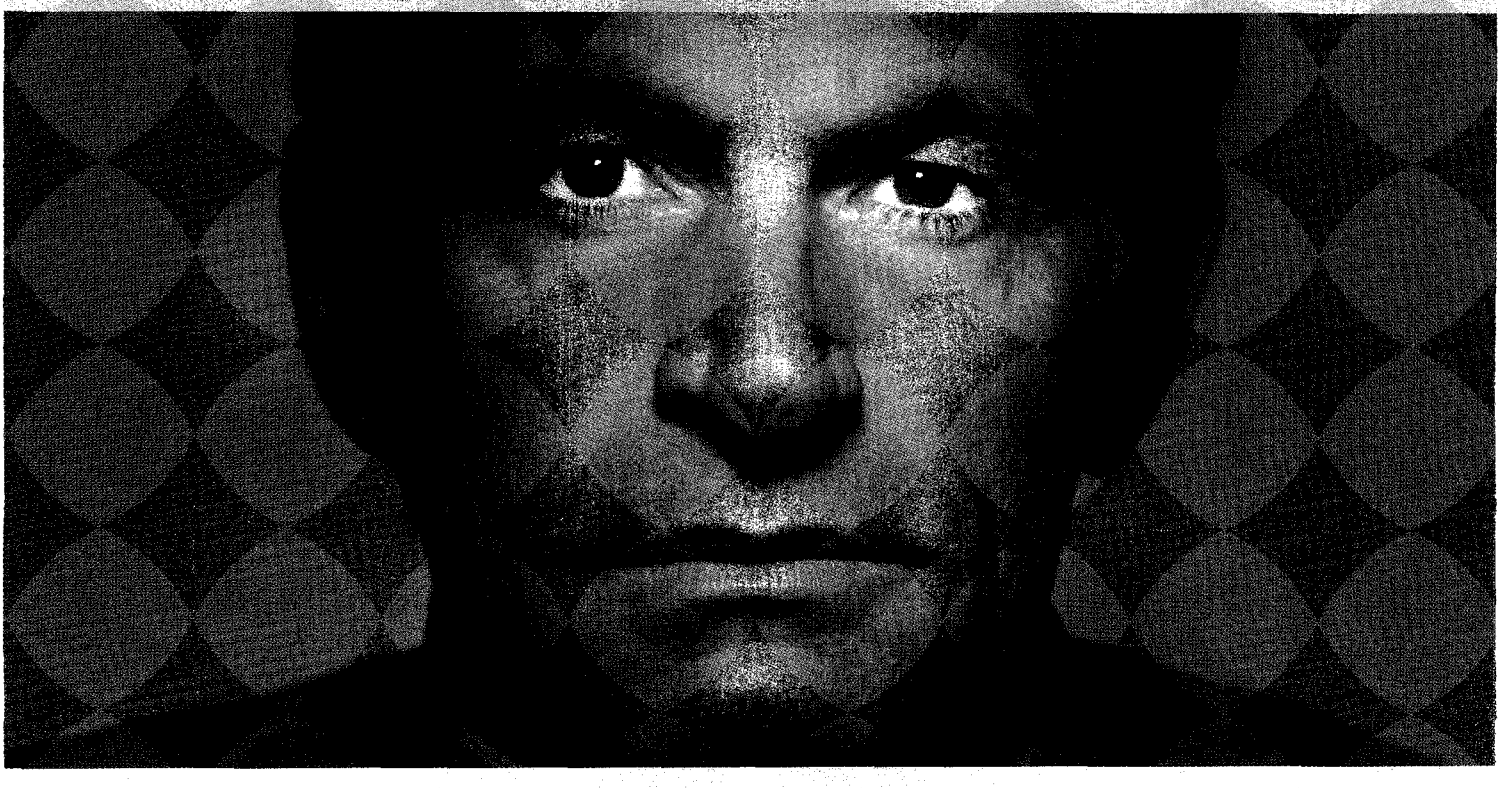
-James Nachtwey, photojournalist.



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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

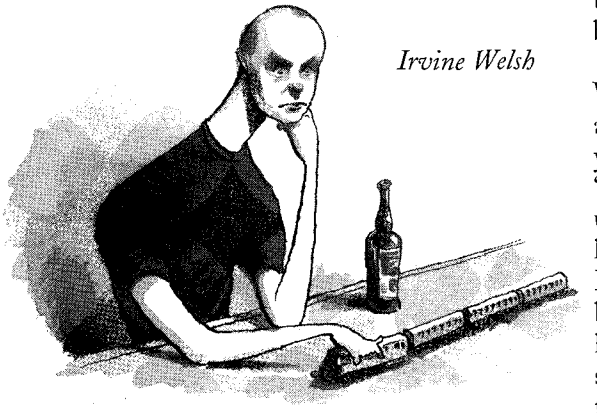
TREND-SPOTTING

WHEN the Scottish writer Irvine Welsh was less busy than he is today—less the rock star and all-round top dog to a nation's youth—he spent a lot of time doing next to nothing: drinking, taking drugs, mucking about. Then, in 1993, his episodic novel "Trainspotting" was published in Britain, and it brilliantly, wittily, caught the rhythm of this life. It was full of people—young Scottish junkies—up to their ears in slack time, trying to rustle up a bit of energy by making characters out of their friends, making stories out of their lives. The novel had resonance for all those who had ever mucked about, or wished they had, or were glad they had not.

"Trainspotting" became first a Scottish cult, then a British publishing miracle. People who did not buy books bought "Trainspotting," and then they saw the play, and the film. They went to Trainspotting, the night club; they carried "Trainspotting" 's vernacular—"radge" (bad, mad) and "barry" (good)—down south. Actual trainspotters (hobbyists at British railroad stations whose doomed, life-structuring purpose—to note the number of every engine, to get the *whole set*—is, in Welsh's opinion, akin to heroin addiction) were canvassed for their opinions by style magazines.

Welsh now found himself doing less hanging around, because he was in great demand by journalists, publishers, film producers, and fans. Scornful of everything in Britain's literary establishment except its royalty checks and kind reviews, Welsh gave readings at rave parties; he was sought out by pop stars. He began to write stories in which the point was that something, rather than nothing, had happened. His characters now aimed to have influence beyond their own bodies, and this did not seem to suit Welsh's voice. In fact, as the United States imports "Trainspotting" (the novel has been published by Norton; the film, to be released July 19th, has been redubbed for its American distributor, Miramax), British critics have been showing disappointment in the clunking plot machinery of Welsh's fourth book, "Ecstasy."

One afternoon a few weeks ago, Welsh—who is now thirty-seven—sat in the corner of a gloomy, vaguely fifties-style bar in Edinburgh, drinking a beer. He has very little hair, and the kind of tightly clustered, small-featured face that could work almost as well upside down. He sported a leather jacket and a tan, and spoke about the Cannes Film Festival, where he had been photographed by the paparazzi and interviewed a thousand times: "Trainspotting" this, "Trainspotting" that. "There'll probably be a perfume, Trainspotting," he said softly. He seemed tired.


Irvine Welsh

Welsh was brought up in an Edinburgh housing project, left school at sixteen, and at one time was a heroin user, a borderline addict. These were the kinds of things emphasized in early publicity. Later, reference was made to a career in local government, a master's degree in business administration, and a flirtation with property development. Welsh can read his life two ways, and in his best writing he dramatizes that fact, via clever-dick characters at one remove from wasted, wasting friends. But Welsh's authenticity is being challenged. He is in the position, unusual for a public figure, of having to defend himself against charges of sobriety. The writer and former heroin user Will Self has accused Welsh of never having injected heroin, a libel that Welsh contests. There has also been some debate about Welsh's age, and he now carries his passport around to prove that he is not, as has been charged, forty-four.

In the Edinburgh bar, Welsh looked for a moment at the passport's photo—his younger, poorer, idler self. "Doing nothing is a totally underrated talent, an easy habit to get out of," he said. He thinks there is a possible connection between his rushing about and "Ecstasy" 's overplotting. "I want to get back just to getting some bastards together and letting them fuck each other over and generate a story," he said, smiling. "Rather than trying to stage things for them." It was time to "get back to basics."

It was this spirit, perhaps, that carried Welsh through a recent four-day binge, which featured "everything—everything you can imagine." For reasons that he cannot quite remember, he was arrested and spent a night in the cells, his first in ten years.

TEST-TUBE BABY

IF the New York City public schools are going to reform themselves, the burden of change will rest on people like Doris Budow. Budow is the freshly minted director of the Science and Literacy Academy, one of five new, smaller

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MICHAEL WITTE

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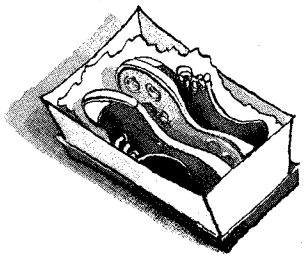
WEST SIDE STORY

HOME in the city on a broiling Saturday, my wife, Carol, and I threw in the towel early, opting for an afternoon full retreat to the sixplex on Broadway at Eighty-fourth Street, where a Parsifal-length submarine-warfare drama (ping-*tongg!* ping-*tongg!*) might keep us cool until almost sundown. On the way, we would stop at Harry's Shoes, just across Broadway from the theatre, where I'd try to snap up a pair of unfashionable, low-gunwale Keds for our upcoming vacation. Weekend afternoons at Harry's can remind you of a Marrakesh souk, but when at last, sneaks in hand, I spotted a vacant try-on chair and threw myself into it, the man sitting to my right, putting on *his* new sneakers, was Alfred Kazin. City etiquette in these circumstances calls for silence, but he and I had met, now and then, at book parties and the like, and I introduced myself.



"Oh, sure," Kazin said, giving me an engaging smile. Though he is seamed and white-haired, there was a lot more student than prof in his gaze. He made a little swishing gesture through the air with one hand, and I nodded yes, right: I was the baseball guy. Our wives were introduced—both of them, I think, enjoying the odd situation, with the seated gents now lacing and stomping like kids and the women standing momlike before them, looking stern about size and fit. The wives went off together, hunting for a salesman and perhaps for some less bankerish choices for their guys, footwear-wise, while Kazin and I, thickly surrounded by the Reeboky hordes, chatted about our boyhood ballparks, here in the city. I offered the Polo Grounds, name-dropping the likes of Mays and Mize, Ott and Hubbell, but he topped me when he said that he remembered Ebbets Field but not for the Dodgers.

"We used to go to the opera at Ebbets Field when I was a kid," he told me. "I went to 'Faust' with my father once. Nobody knows it now, but the mayor—the first one I can remember, from back in the twenties—sometimes arranged for free opera there for a few summer days. I don't know which opera company—I can't imagine they were any good. But he was there in person, walking up and down the aisles and reminding us what he'd done. 'Are you having fun? Are you having fun?' he'd ask. 'It's courtesy of your mayor, John F. Hylan, and don't you forget it!' "

I said that I'd interviewed Mayor LaGuardia once, for my school paper, after waiting all day in his office. I could no longer remember anything he'd said but still kept the vision of his feet, under the vast mayoral desk, not quite touching the floor.

"Yes!" Kazin said. "A small man but a big mayor. The best."

Judith Dunford, Kazin's wife, had arrived with a salesman, and while their order was being written up her husband checked his watch and said, "We're just right."

They were headed for the sixplex, too, it turned out—and for the same underwater epic. "Judith wanted 'Little Odessa,' " Kazin said, "but I had a different plan. Anything not to think!"

After we said goodbye, Carol and I looked at each other and said "Isn't New York great" at the same instant. Just after that, while I was standing at the cashier's counter, the Kazins came past me, with the critic carrying his Harry's parcel under his arm. "In New York," I heard him say, "you go for shoes and meet a writer."

All this happened exactly a year ago. The name of the movie was "Crimson Tide." I recall nothing about it except Gene Hackman losing his cool and Denzel Washington really keeping his. Remembering the Kazins at Harry's Shoes is a different story: that's easy.

—ROGER ANGELL

schools that will replace P.S. 122, a Bronx elementary school, starting next fall. Last year, State Education Commissioner Richard Mills threatened to close P.S. 122 and twelve other underperforming city schools unless they turned themselves around in two years. New York City Schools Chancellor Rudy Crew outdid the Commissioner by announcing that he would begin the process of redesigning the schools immediately, replacing them with reform-minded institutions. School officials in the Bronx took the directive seriously, assembling a team that solicited proposals for new schools. Science and Literacy was one of the winners, and two weeks ago Budow, a staff developer at P.S. 122, was appointed director. That left her with about ten weeks to prepare a miracle.

Budow, a coppery-skinned woman with marcelled blond hair, says, "I'm up at four in the morning thinking about what I've undertaken—the excitement of it." The new school, which is expected to have up to two hundred and fifty students, will specialize in "hands-on" science education, with regular trips to the Bronx Zoo and the Botanical Garden. Budow hopes to have the kind of elaborately outfitted science lab that is rarely seen in New York elementary schools. Teachers and parents will be able to receive training in science education at City College. And science will function as an organizing theme, with a reading program focussed on science-related texts.

Nevertheless, Budow is worried about the Commissioner's, and the Chancellor's, expectations. "No school system can change so dramatically in one year," she says. "Give us two years, three years." P.S. 122 has a large population of impoverished recent immigrants, mostly from the Dominican Republic. More than half of them need special English-language training; many arrive, at age seven or eight, with virtually no education in their native tongue. And the turnover is staggering: one year, sixty-eight per cent of the third graders were new to the school. Last year, only twenty-four per cent of the students tested read at their grade level.

Overwhelming as these problems are, the system, with its shortsightedness and its inflexible rules, is just as great an obstacle to reform. The district superintendent, Irma Zardoya, says, "If you have a different governance and philosophy, but the teachers are the same, is it in reality a new school?" Yet the current teachers'

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contract, negotiated with the Giuliani administration, stipulates that, when a school such as P.S. 122 is closed down, sixty-five per cent of its teachers have a right to remain in the replacement schools, and that they will exercise that right solely according to seniority—meaning that new schools are bound to have old teachers. And even that stricture wasn't much of a problem for Budow and the other directors (two of whom come from P.S. 122); the roster of proposed teachers which they submitted to the superintendent included virtually all the old staff.

Budow bridles at the idea that her school might benefit from fresh blood. "These," she says, "are the people who have committed to change." Anyway, she adds, hardly anyone from outside the school applied for the new teaching slots—she's not sure why. Perhaps they weren't convinced that the magnitude of the solution would be equal to the magnitude of the problem.

THE YAWNING OF A NEW ERA

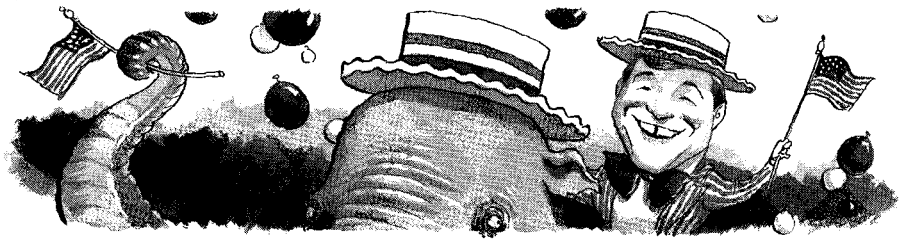
TOWARD the end of a recent meeting of the World Wide Web Artists Consortium, a red-haired man read from his laptop a recent Ann Landers column in which she called the Internet a perfect forum for "con men, the lonely, and the bored." When he had finished, the leader of the meeting asked the hundred or so attendees, "O.K., who's a con man?" A pair of hands shot up. "Who's lonely?" A few more. "And who's bored?" At that, almost all the hands in the room rose.

TO THE PARTY BORN

THE executive director of the San Diego Host Committee for the Republican National Convention ("Sail to San Diego 1996" is the red-lettered slogan on the director's blue-on-white card) is forty-four-year-old Jack Ford, the second of the four children of former President Gerald Ford and Betty Ford. "This is my sixth Republican Convention," Jack Ford says cheerily, his voice pitched surprisingly high and thin. He is ensconced in a colorless, carpeted office in the Symphony Towers, one of the city's tallest buildings. He looks like an asking-to-be-liked golf pro at a country club, with stringy, fading blond hair brushed carefully to the side, a jolly smile with excellent big teeth, a face with high coloring, and hints of flab that today stretch his blue oxford shirt a bit too tightly across his middle.

"I've been on board since last August," he says. "My tasks are specified by the Republican National Committee. We're careful around here to be respectful of the"—he pauses as he grins, raises his hands over his ears, and wiggles his forefingers in curled, forward position—"hierarchy." He gives a light laugh. "We want to put our best foot forward," he says. "Pull together on the same oar. Speak with one voice."

Ford, who lives in Rancho Santa Fe, California, is on a leave of absence from his usual job, in the shopping-center business (customer and marketing aspects). He has worked as a ranger in Yellowstone National Park, and since 1982 he has been on the board of directors of the Del Mar Fairgrounds and Racetrack. "There are six hundred thousand Republicans in San Diego County—as many people as in the whole state of Kansas," Ford maintains. "They'll all be wanting to come to the Convention—August 12th to 15th—in Convention Hall, along with, of course, the six thousand delegates and twenty thousand additional Republicans. Not to mention ten thousand in the media. It's our task to bus and shuttle them around, keep track of them on our state-of-the-art computer system, provide security, get out a master calendar of events, and list all the social parties. In Houston in '92, we had eight hundred social parties. So you can imagine!" In response to the presumptive nominee's gripes about the cramped auditorium, Ford says, "Bob Dole's people needn't worry that the Convention Center's low ceiling might preclude a balloon drop. We're doing tests now for all accoutrements critical to a successful convention. The bells and whistles will not suffer, and maybe we'll have a balloon *rise*."



Jack Ford

Ford likes to talk about his experiences in politics. "At the age of twelve, I was a page at the 1964 Convention, in San Francisco," he says. "We, the pages, wore these funny little orange vests. I ran around a lot and got a lot of hot dogs and a lot of Cokes for the delegates. Dad was a congressman from Michigan. I knew then, sitting on the floor of the Convention, how much I loved politics. Rockefeller was challenging Goldwater for the nomination, but Dad got in the middle, between them. Dad nominated George Romney as a favorite son. But Goldwater got the nomination to run against Johnson.

"In '68, I was at the Convention in Miami, where Richard Nixon was nominated. I was a staff assistant, stationed behind the podium. My task was to keep John Wayne behind stage, out of sight, until they were ready to bring him out. He was very impatient, striding up and down, looking, well, very John Wayne. You know, ten feet tall? He kept asking me, 'Isn't it time? Isn't it time yet?' I had to keep him out of sight while the Nixon people were negotiating with the Reagan people. The Nixon people were afraid that Reagan would get more applause. Well, everything worked out in the end, and Nixon was nominated. Dad was very down to earth about those things. He never got gaga excited. He's always been a"—again with curled forefingers—" 'walk the walk, not just talk the talk' man.

"In '72, for the Convention in Miami, I was deputy national college director," Ford says. "I had the enviable task of recruiting college students for Richard Nixon." He laughs. "But we got them, including from Berkeley. We took three thousand students to the Convention in Miami. That was real fun. In '76, at the Convention in Kansas City, I was the First Family's surrogate. I was twenty-four years old, and I admitted publicly that I had smoked pot. When they came at me for it, Dad said he had raised me to tell the truth." He continues, "Bob Dole ran for Vice-President with Dad in '76. Bob Dole was a gentleman. But the one I couldn't stop looking at was his wife, Elizabeth. For me, it was Wow! What a babe!" ♦

"Trend-Spotting," Ian Parker; "Test-Tube Baby," James Traub; "The Yawning of a New Era," Paul Tullis; "To the Party Born," Lillian Ross.

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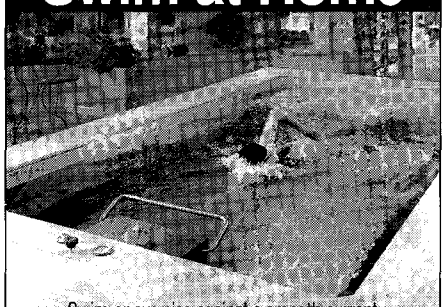

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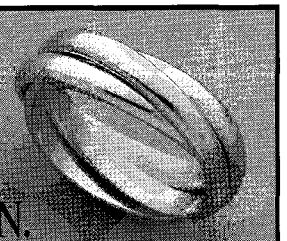

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

PLAYING WITH FIRE

Who is burning the churches, and who is exploiting the issue?

BY MICHAEL KELLY

JUST after ten o'clock on the morning of June 8th, the President of the United States, speaking from the Oval Office, addressed the nation on a matter of grave concern. "This morning, I want to talk with you about a recent and disturbing rash of crimes that hearkens back to a dark era in our nation's history," the President said. "Just two days ago, when the Matthews Murkland Presbyterian Church, in Charlotte, North Carolina, was burned to the ground, it became at least the thirtieth African-American church destroyed or damaged by suspicious fire in the South in the past eighteen months." He continued, "We do not now have evidence of a national conspiracy, but it is clear that racial hostility is the driving force behind a number of these incidents." He noted that two of those arrested in connection with the burnings of black churches were "known members of the Ku Klux Klan," and he recalled a period during the nineteen-fifties and sixties, when black churches were burned to intimidate civil-rights workers, and the bombing of a Birmingham church "took the lives of four precious children." When he declared that "we must never allow that to happen again," the message was clear: it was happening again; a new dark era loomed.

At the time that Bill Clinton gave this speech, his first on the burning of black churches, investigators had not determined who set the fire at the Matthews Murkland Presbyterian Church, or what the arsonist's motive was. Two days later, the investigators announced their finding: the blaze that the President had presented as an illustration of "the fires of hatred" sweeping across America had been set by an emotionally troubled thirteen-year-old girl. Although the child was white, there wasn't the slightest suggestion that she had been motivated by racial animus. Moreover, there was no connection between the fire she set and any of the other fires at other black churches. This solitary act of pubescent madness seemed to have nothing to do with issues of race or of politics. It certainly bore no comparison to the systematic efforts of white supremacists during the civil-rights years to halt the advance of equal rights for black Americans by fire bombing and burning dozens of the Southern black

From the evidence to date, the true picture is less clear, and less apocalyptic, than what the public has been led to believe.

SUE COE

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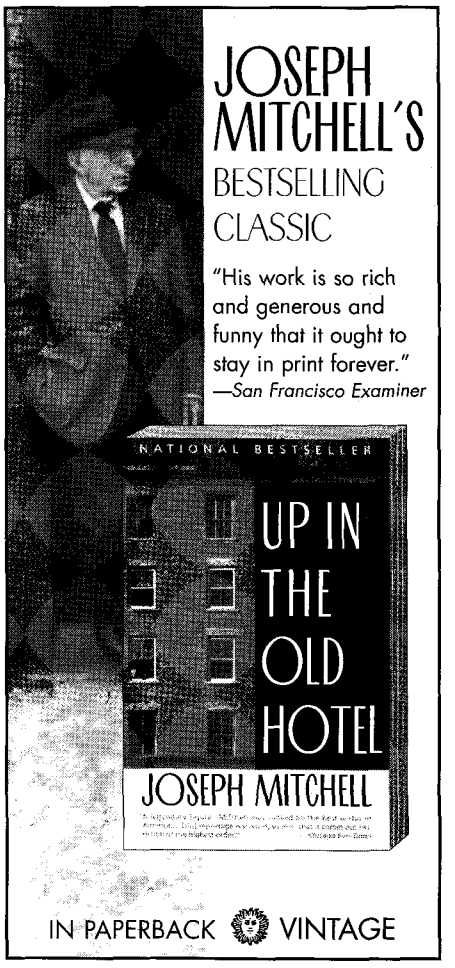
churches from which the war against Jim Crow had been launched.

President Clinton's June 8th address was symptomatic of a larger phenomenon. For many months, as black-church burnings increased in the Southeast, the mainline media and the politicians of both parties paid scant attention. Then, in a case of overreaction that seems to have been inspired in roughly equal measure by genuine concern, guilt, and self-interest, they leaped on the bandwagon with a near-hysteria as misplaced as their previous indifference. In the past several months, the President and his Administration, the congressional leadership of both parties, the national media, religious groups, and the leaders of political-interest groups from both the left and the right have lent credence to the idea that the country is in the grip of what the Assistant Attorney General for civil rights, Deval Patrick, calls "an epidemic of terror"—an orgy of black-church burnings, inspired by a resurgence of racial hatred and with clear conspiratorial overtones, that may properly be compared to the attacks on black churches during the civil-rights years.

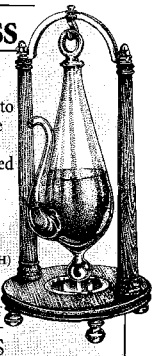
The truth is a good deal more complicated. In the past eighteen months, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of reported fires at black churches in the Southeast, and there is little doubt that in a significant number of the fires racial animosity was a motive. Given the region's history of racial violence, this increase is something that has to be taken with utmost seriousness, and the federal government has done so, sending into the field one of the largest task forces of investigators and agents—more than two hundred—since the civil-rights years. But, from the evidence to date, the true picture of black-church fires is less clear, and less apocalyptic, than what the public has been led to believe. There have been nearly as many white-church fires as black (although the number of black-church fires is proportionately greater, because there are many more white churches than black in America). Some of the black-church fires were accidents. Racism is strongly indicated in fewer than half of the black-church fires investigated to date. Other motives include mental instability, concealment of theft, and vandalism. There is no evidence at this time of any conspiracy extending beyond two or three people. There is no evidence of a master plot by organized hate groups. The people who set racially motivated fires at black churches tend to be loners and losers and copycats acting largely on drunken impulse, and they are few in number.

THE multi-partisan quality in the politicians' and the media's depiction of a national epidemic of racist church burnings derives from a legitimate shared concern but also from a rare concatenation of disparate political interests.

For the interest groups that pushed the issue to national attention—they range from the Center for Democratic Renewal and the National Council of Churches, on the left, to the Christian Coalition, on the right—an epidemic of church burnings is the sort of crisis that engenders respectful attention from the press, opens the wallets of the people on the mailing list, and provides a virtually unassailable vehicle for advancing the groups' various larger agendas. This gives rise to the sort of rhetoric that heightens, rather than diminishes, the sense of conspiracy and danger. "The white hate groups are growing faster than at any time in our history," the Reverend Robert Polk, of the National Council of Churches, has declared. "The terrorists who committed these crimes against our African-American brothers and sisters will be dealt with," the Christian Coalition's Ralph Reed has promised. "We will hunt them down. We will bring them to justice and put them away for a long, long time." Nelson Rivers, the Southern regional director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, has said, "While there may not be a conspiracy of deed yet proved, there seems to be at least a conspiracy of thought." The Reverend Joseph Lowery, head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, characterized the suspected perpetrators of the fires as "white males," many of whom "belong to the Ku Klux Klan. They belong to the skinheads." He has also maintained, "While we might debate whether or not there's a national conspiracy, there is no doubt that there's a national network of racial hostility and oppression in this country." J. L. Chestnut, Jr., a founder of the Alabama New South Coalition, wrote in a newspaper column, "Don't try



The Weather Glass



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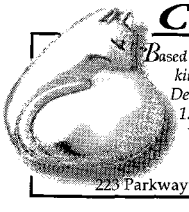

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"I wouldn't marry you if you were the last gay person on earth!"

• •

to hold your breath until the feds or [Alabama Attorney General] Jeff Sessions find and prosecute the terrorists who have returned to the bloody and dastardly act of bombing black churches. If and when they find these bloody cowards who destroy black churches in the dark of night, they will not be placed on chain gangs as a deterrent to others; rather they may be given medals in secret." At the press conference announcing the arrest of the thirteen-year-old girl in the Matthews Murkland fire, the chairwoman of the N.A.A.C.P., Myrlie Evers-Williams, continued to insist that racism must not be ruled out. "They have not concluded conclusively that there was no racial motivation there," she said.

For the Republicans, whose Contract with America agenda has led to accusations of callousness toward the needs of black Americans, the issue offers a chance for compassion on the cheap. "We condemn acts of violence and acts of hatred, and we are prepared to use the full force of the federal government and the resources of the federal government to strengthen and protect Americans and their places of worship," Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich said, in a burst of boilerplate. The Republican Presidential candidate Bob Dole issued a statement, too: "I urge the Justice Department and all state and local law enforcement authorities to use every available resource to find and punish the cowards responsible for these vicious acts of hate."

For the media, the church burnings make a good, dramatic story, seemingly unclouded by the usual ambiguities. And it is a familiar story. Reporters love familiarity. Struggling on deadline to make sense of the chaos that is the daily world, they operate on a set of conventions, by fitting the confusing and often conflicting facts before them into certain well-established paradigms. Perhaps because there is nothing so confounding in American life as the issues of race, the civil-rights paradigm is the strongest in all journalism. Thus the Reverend Al Sharpton is shoehorned into the shape of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the fires of 1996 are transformed into the fires of 1963. On July 1st, the Washington *Post* ran a story by the novelist Melissa Fay Greene about a fire at the Pine Lake Baptist Church, in Pine Lake, Georgia. The story, which began on the front page of the Style section, was headlined "TRIAL BY FIRE," and continued on the next page under the headline "A TORCHED CHURCH CARRIES ON." Greene's summary paragraph captures the tone throughout: "In the 1950s and '60s, homemade bombs destroyed hundreds of targets, especially black churches, homes of black ministers, synagogues and integrated schools. The current church burnings, devastating black churches and integrated ones, seem part of a similar effort to turn back the clock to Jim Crow time: blacks are warned to stay in their place, whites are warned not to mix." The known facts about the burning at the Pine Lake Baptist Church—which Greene includes in her article, but in a dismissive manner—are at odds with the article's tone. The church, which has six hundred members and is ninety-five per cent white, was never burned. It is a big red brick building with a white steeple, and it stands as of this writing. What was burned in the early morning of June 17th was the church's original sanctuary, a small, older wooden structure situated on the church grounds but not physically connected to the church. It was used at the time of the fire as a children's center. Investigators from the DeKalb County police and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms say that they have found no evidence of arson.

For President Clinton, the church burnings provide an opportunity to play, in especially moving circumstances, the role of the national father, which his campaign advisers have made a central part of his reëlection strategy. In Bob Woodward's new book, "The Choice," Clinton is quoted as saying that he is a "person out of my time," and that he would much rather have been President during the Second World War. Clinton's yearning to be a beloved and heroic President leading the nation through a crisis is at times palpable to the point of embarrassment. (Recall the excruciating moment in 1994 when he knelt, before a wall of television cameras, in apparent prayer on the beach where two thousand men had died on D-Day.) Events have not provided Bill Clinton with an opportunity to be F.D.R. in 1942, but the church burnings have given him the next best thing—J.F.K. in 1963.

For Democrats in general, the issue offers a superb opportunity—as good as the Oklahoma City bombing—to render illegitimate the arguments of their conservative Republican opponents, this time by suggesting that attacks on black churches are the result of a climate of metastasizing racism inspired by conservative attempts to end affirmative action, to push

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hard-line policies on crime, and to radically reform the welfare system.

On June 12th, the President scrapped his campaign schedule and flew to Greeleyville, South Carolina, in order to attend the dedication of the new Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church, which had been built to replace a church burned last year, authorities say, by two white men. The evidence suggested that the men had been motivated by racial hatred. At the site of the new church, Clinton declared of the spate of church burnings that "we must keep this out of politics." But the President's speech also hinted at the idea that the church burnings were connected with the raising of "divisive" issues. "Every time you hear somebody use race or religion as an instrument of division and hatred, speak up against it," he said. Clinton did not have to be any more direct than that. Before he arrived, several speakers had warmed up the crowd by making the point more explicitly and demagogically. The Reverend Jesse Jackson, who later flew back to Washington with Clinton on Air Force One, had declared that conservatives on the Supreme Court and in Congress had by their actions created a climate that was directly responsible for the church burnings. "It's easy to scapegoat the Klan . . . but the clouds have been seeded by forces far more powerful than they are," Jackson said. "That's why the conspiracy may not be one or two or three individuals in a room saying, 'Let's burn churches.' We have something worse than that. We have a cultural conspiracy, where if you light a match in a field and little fires break out all over the field, it means that the land mines have been laid." Linking as equally culpable the church-burners in "white sheets," the Supreme Court justices in "black robes," and the Republican politicians in "blue suits," Jackson said, "Those in blue suits who use thinly coded, veiled race symbols when they say welfare and crime and three strikes and anti-affirmative action, they're sending signals, they're sending messages more profound than their language. . . . When these blue suits seed the clouds and black robes restrict our political districts, they're laying the groundwork for those . . . that burn churches."

Placing the blame for the church burnings on a cultural conspiracy of white racism works toward two important political goals. First, by changing the definition of the word "conspiracy" to implicate not only the whites who have actually plotted to burn a church but whites in general and the entire American political establishment, it obscures the fact that federal investigators have to date uncovered no evidence of any national, or even regional, conspiracy in any of the fires, and it reaffirms the idea that 1996 equals 1963. Second, in a critical election year it works to establish a political climate in which any Republican attempts to win votes on some of the Party's most popular issues may be depicted as fostering anti-black violence. Not surprisingly, Jackson's interpretation was quickly embraced by those whose political interests it would serve. On June 19th, the Washington *Post* quoted Noah Chandler, of the Center for Democratic Renewal, a left-wing group that reports on right-wing extremism, as saying, "The conspiracy is racism itself." That afternoon, Vice-President Gore, speaking to the press after a meeting with governors from states affected by the church burnings, picked up the idea. "My personal view is that there will be, at the end of the day, a number of different motivations found for different cases," Gore said, but, he added, "for a large number of them . . . the conspiracy is racism itself."

There is a final, emotional reason that the idea of a national epidemic of racist whites burning black churches has such resonance. It taps the culture's profound longing for a return to a time of moral clarity. My earliest political memory is of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.,'s March on Washington, in August of 1963: of me standing with my sister Kate in our front yard on Constitution Avenue and handing out, under our mother's direction, lemonade to the endless marchers on their way to the Mall—men and women, black and white, all of them starchily splendid in suits and summer dresses, the men with their ties knotted tight, the women with white gloves. I can remember my mother explaining carefully, as she set us up in the yard with a wooden table and her two largest soup pots filled with lemonade, that we were about to take part in an event that was not only of historic significance but also of overwhelming goodness. The feeling of righteousness I enjoyed that day is faint in my memory now, and it is faint in the national memory, too. There is a natural yearning to recapture it. Three weeks after the March on Washington, there occurred the most horrific and morally unambiguous act of violence in all the civil-rights years, when a bomb exploded in the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church, in Birmingham, Alabama. It was the twenty-eighth unsolved bomb attack against a black target in Birmingham, and it killed four little girls, who had been in church that day to attend Bible class. To equate the black-church burnings of 1996 with the bombings of 1963 evokes the horror of Birmingham, but it also conjures up the sweetness and rightness of the day in Washington three weeks before.

BETWEEN January 1, 1995, and July 2, 1996, ninety-eight cases of arson of a house of worship have been investigated by the A.T.F. Almost half of these burnings—forty-six of them—took place at churches or synagogues where most or all of the congregants were white. The fifty-two others occurred at churches where most or all of the congregants were black. Taken by themselves, these figures do not represent an increase in church fires. Churches are torched fairly often in this country. According to the National Fire Protection Association, which collates information on fires nationwide, church fires account for well under one per cent of the reported fires in America each year, but the leading cause of church fires is arson, accounting for one of every four churches that burn. People burn churches for all sorts of reasons. Churches are largely unguarded, and they contain items of value, the theft of which may be easily masked by fire. They are often built of wood and are filled with wooden pews, and so lend themselves to the sort of spectacular conflagration that sets the heart of the pyromaniac racing. They are beloved by their communities, which makes them attractive targets for a small but recognized species of arsonist, the volunteer fireman who is impelled to set an important fire so that he may shine as a local hero in putting the fire out. Churches represent God, and many people get angry at God. (More often than not, they get angry not at someone else's God but at their own: the A.T.F. files record the cases of a Protestant man

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who burned thirty-one Protestant churches, and a Jewish man who burned twelve synagogues.) They represent authority and are therefore a natural target of adolescent vandals. They are places of refuge for alcoholic and drug-addled vagrants, who have a tendency to be careless with matches.

Over the last decade and a half, the number of church burnings per year has declined sharply. The National Fire Protection Association reports that church burnings have been falling since 1980, when a thousand four hundred and twenty church arsons were recorded, to less than six hundred per year in recent years. In 1994, there were five hundred and twenty reported church arsons, the smallest number in fifteen years.

These numbers, however, must be seen in a broader context. In the case of the white-church burnings, the rate of fires has not significantly increased over the last eighteen months, but in the case of the black-church burnings the numbers do indicate a sharp increase. More important, most of the black-church burnings have taken place in one area of the country: the Southeast. In 1995, the A.T.F. investigated nine suspicious fires at black churches in the Southeast. So far in 1996, the bureau has investigated thirty-one such fires. Some of the increase can be ascribed to an upsurge in the reporting of arsons, brought about by the publicity given to the black-church burnings. The director of the A.T.F., John Magaw, told me that local fire and police authorities are not required to report church fires to the federal government, and normally less than half of all church fires are reported. Now, Magaw said, because of the immense media coverage given to the black-church fires, "all over the country, people are thinking about church fires," and, as a result, "all over the country more church fires are going to be reported this year." The increased reporting has, without question, caused a swelling in the total number of church fires recorded by the federal government in the past eighteen months.

But, as Magaw also adamantly argued, the increase in the number of black-church fires in the Southeast during the past eighteen months is much too dramatic to be explained away by a mere increase in reporting. "There are too many predominantly African-American churches being burned in too concentrated an area," he said. "This clearly indicates an underlying vindictiveness toward black churches. Any person who lives in that part of the country would know how important the church is to the African-American community. It is more than a house of worship—it is the community gathering place, the base of political activity, the heart and soul of the community. I believe there has to be an element in these fires of attempting to intimidate or cause hurt to the black communities."

Magaw's conclusion that racial animus is a root cause of at least some of the black-church arsons in the Southeast is not, of course, news to anyone who has followed the story. But he drew four further distinctions about the fires which have been largely obscured by the hype on the issue. First, Magaw said, the plague of arson fires against black churches has not spread much beyond the Southeast. There is no evidence of a national epidemic of black-church arsons. Second, while some evidence has been uncovered of what might be called conspiracy in some of the fires, these acts of collusion barely meet the legal requirements of the term—they are, in Magaw's words, "two or three people conspiring with each other to burn down one or two churches." The picture of today's racist church-burners that has been drawn in some of the political rhetoric comes straight out of 1963—white-sheeted supremacists, working in concert toward a politically intelligible goal. A true portrait of the 1996 race-motivated church-burner, as it has emerged from the evidence to date, would show a couple of small-town white teen-agers or young men—very likely drunk—acting without any outside direction or prior planning, and certainly motivated by racism but also by hooliganism. "There is no evidence of any interstate conspiracy at this point, no evidence yet of involvement by organized hate groups," Magaw said (although he cautioned that such evidence may emerge as the investigation continues). Third, the only solid evidence to date clearly indicates that racial animus was a motive in some of the fires but not in a majority of them. "People are saying that all these fires are hate crimes, but that is not right," Magaw said. "It is much more of a mixed bag. In some cases, fires were set to cover up crimes. There have been cases of pyromania. In one case, a guy who was drinking beer set a fire with his cigarette. The truth is going to turn out to be somewhere between people saying all these fires are racial and people saying there is nothing racial going on at all." Finally, it is clear that at least some of the fires set in recent months were the work of copycat arsonists, who may have been racist but who also had been inspired by the media attention given to the fires. "You've got some guy, some loser type of guy, sitting there, watching the TV news of a church fire," Magaw said, "and he says to himself, 'Hey, I could do that. I've been wanting to do something like this for a long time, but I didn't have the nerve.' "

Magaw's evaluation of who is setting fires at black churches in the South, and why, is backed up by the most exhaustive study of the fires thus far, a two-month investigation by *USA Today* that involved five hundred interviews, forty-five visits to arson scenes, and an examination of state fire records throughout the region. The newspaper concluded that there had been a great increase in arsons at Southern black churches, and it identified sixty-four such cases since January, 1995. But it did not find anything to support the idea of a national conspiracy, or the active involvement of hate groups, or even a general increase in racial animosity among whites toward blacks. Rather, it found a variety of motives for the crimes. Its analysis also suggested that a relatively small number of people could be responsible for a large number of the black-church arsons. Clusters of fires at black churches—where a number of fires were set in the same area and over a brief period, and which are most likely the work of serial arsonists—accounted almost entirely for the increase between 1995 and 1996, the paper reported: "otherwise, arsons would be at near-normal levels." Examining the lives of fourteen white suspects in six black-church-burning cases dating back to 1991 in which charges of racially motivated arson had been brought or were being considered, the newspaper found that the men had various traits in common: they were poor, ill-educated young rubes, and most of them were drunk when they allegedly committed their crimes.

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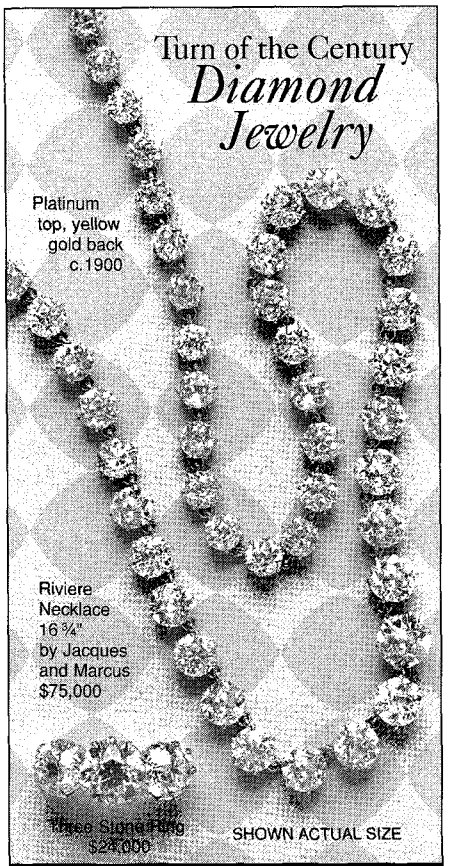
Magaw's analysis is also supported by a close examination of forty-nine A.T.F.-investigated fires that occurred in Southern churches between January of 1995 and June 30, 1996. Ten of the fires were determined to have been caused by accidents. Of the thirty-nine fires that were connected to arson, arrests had been made in nine cases by the end of June. These are the only cases in which there is enough hard evidence to ascertain beyond guesswork the motives of the arsonists, and compelling evidence of a racial motive has been unearthed in only two of them, involving the same two suspects. In another case, hooliganism appears to have been the primary motive, but there is also an underlying suggestion of race. In one more case, the alleged arsonist appears to have been motivated by the volunteer fireman's hero complex, but racial motivations have not been entirely ruled out. The remaining cases, investigators believe, were inspired by motives other than race.

Beyond the cases in which arrests permit a motive to be surmised, the picture is murkier. In at least eleven of the thirty fires in which no arrests had been made, circumstances such as racist graffiti or the fact that a cluster of black churches were burned on the same night strongly suggest racial motivation. In at least five fires, the available evidence indicates that race did not play a part in the motive. (In the case of a March fire at the St. Paul A.M.E. Church, in Hatley, Mississippi, for instance, witnesses told investigators that the man who set fire to the church's door had driven along a seven-mile stretch of road setting a small fire in the grass every hundred yards or so; the church fire was simply one in the series.) The Arkansas *Democrat-Gazette*, in an analysis of A.T.F. cases, reported on June 20th that in cases where a motive was apparent, vandalism and pyromania outpaced racial hatred by a margin of five to one. The newspaper noted that the number of suspects in the black-church arsons since January 1, 1995, who have been positively linked to organized hate groups is precisely the same as the number of suspects who are volunteer firemen: two.

A detailed look at the nine cases in which arrests had been made as of June 30th illustrates the variety of motives that investigators are finding in the black-church arsons. In the case involving the fire at the Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church in Greeleyville and another fire, at the Macedonia Church, in Manning, South Carolina, on June 22, 1995, racial hatred seems to have been the motive. Two white men, Gary Christopher Cox, twenty-two, and Timothy Adron Welch, twenty-four, have been arrested and charged. The suspects are also accused by authorities of assaulting a black man several days before the church burnings. One of them was carrying a Ku Klux Klan membership card in his wallet. In another case—a fire on August 15, 1995, at the St. John Baptist Church, in Lexington County, South Carolina—the primary motive appears to have been hooliganism, but a history of sometimes racially motivated acts of vandalism at the church means that racism cannot be entirely ruled out. In May of this year, the county sheriff's department arrested three young white men, two of them seventeen and one nineteen, and charged them with the crime. Captain Larry Shea, of the sheriff's department, notes that the church and its neighboring cemetery were situated in a remote area, and for the past fifteen years had been an attractive target for teen-age vandals, most of them white. Departmental files show thirty-four reported incidents of vandalism, trespassing, and burglary on the church's property since 1985. Shea says that some of the vandalism was inspired by racism, but some of it also had to do with a belief, which sprang up some years ago among local high-school students, that the cemetery was haunted. "Kids would come there on Halloween, and often on dates, so they could scare their young girlfriends in order to make their moves on them easier," Shea says. As for the fire itself, he says that there was some indication that race was not a motive, for "all three young men live in a racially mixed neighborhood, and are friends with blacks."

In one other case, there was a hint of race as a possible motive. On February 28th of this year, nineteen-year-old Christopher Deer is alleged to have set fire to the New Liberty Baptist Church, in Tyler, Alabama. "Deer is white, but the fire was not racially motivated," Brett Howard, of the Dallas County sheriff's department, says. "He is a volunteer fireman with the Tyler Fire Department, and, basically, he enjoyed putting out



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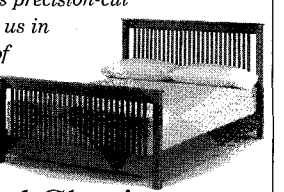
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fires." James Cavanaugh, the A.T.F. special agent in charge of Mississippi and Alabama, agrees that "so far, the cause of the fire seems to be a hero complex." But Cavanaugh notes that he has referred the case to the F.B.I. for further investigation into the possibility of a civil-rights violation, adding, "I do have a reason to refer it."

In the five remaining cases, race motivation does not seem to play a part. On March 30th of this year, authorities say, Enoch Adams, a thirty-four-year-old white man, set fire to loose tarpaper on the El Bethel Church, in Satartia, Mississippi. "There was not a racial motivation," Buddy Passons, the Yazoo County sheriff, says. "This young man is mentally off. He's strictly a firebug. He would look for unoccupied buildings and set fire to them because he liked to see things burn. He probably didn't know it was a church, not to mention a black church. He has the mind of a twelve- or thirteen-year-old. The buildings he burned before this one were owned by white people." Just before setting the fire at El Bethel, Passons says, Adams set fire to an abandoned house down the road.

On May 23rd of this year, Curtis Gilbert and Rodney Bullock are alleged to have set fire to a building next to the Mt. Tabor Baptist Church, in Cerro Gordo, North Carolina. Both men are black. Authorities say they had been working on a construction crew that was renovating the building and decided to burn it, apparently for reasons arising from a dispute over money. This event was reported as a church fire, but the structure that burned was not the church, although the church was planning to use it for classrooms. Another case in which race was apparently not a motive involved the thirteen-year-old emotionally troubled girl who allegedly set fire to the Mathews Murkland Church. On May 24th, Billy Shawn Baxley, seventeen, is alleged to have set fire to the Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, in Lumberton, North Carolina. Baxley, who is white, is another volunteer fireman. "There is not one scintilla of evidence that it was racially motivated," Mark Locklear, of the Robeson County sheriff's department, says. "He had been watching a movie, and there had been a lot of things being burned in the movie, and it made him want to go out and burn something. The church was nearby."

On April 16th, authorities charge, two white men—Leigh Tatum Odom, eighteen, and Adam Thomas Sapp, nineteen—and a sixteen-year-old white girl set a fire at the black First Baptist Church of Centralia, in Chesterfield, Virginia. Captain James Bourque, of the Chesterfield Police Department, says that, judging from the suspects' statements, the incident was not racially motivated. "This church had been vacant for a number of years, and was used for storage," he says. "It was in a relatively remote area, and it attracted teen-agers out to have fun. They entered the church and lit candles and at some point got carried away. I don't believe they realized it was a black church."

"Now, how many of you liked the viola player best?"

THE Justice Department, whose standard for investigation is far more encompassing than the A.T.F.'s, has prepared a list of "incidents of violence against houses of worship." The list covers all such events that have come to the attention of the department, and is frequently updated. The list for the period between May of 1990 and June 18th of this year runs to two hundred and sixteen entries.

An analysis of the Justice Department's list finds much the same pattern as that on the A.T.F. list. On the Justice Department list, eighty-four incidents occurred at churches that are described as having predominantly black congregations, six at churches with racially mixed congregations, twelve at synagogues, seven at mosques, two at Hispanic churches, two at Korean churches, and one at a Greek Orthodox church that a couple of skinheads had mistaken for a synagogue. The list does not identify the churches that had predominantly white congregations, but there are a hundred and two houses of

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worship where an incident occurred which are not identified as black, racially mixed, or ethnic, and presumably most or all of these are white. Thirty-one of the incidents listed were not fires but lesser acts of vandalism or hatemongering, like the burning of crosses or the spray-painting of racist graffiti.

Of the incidents at black or racially mixed churches, fourteen were not fires. Six fires at black churches were determined to have been caused by accidents. That leaves a total of seventy fires in churches that are listed as black or racially mixed, and where arson has been proved or suspected or where the origin of the fire remains unclear.

The Justice Department list as of June 18th records arrests as having been made in eighteen cases, involving twenty-one fires at black churches, one at a racially mixed church, and one at a Hispanic church. In five of these cases, involving ten fires, racism was clearly a motive, if not always the sole motive. In another case, that of the St. John Baptist fire, hooliganism appears to have been the primary motive, racism a less likely motive. In eight other cases where arrests had been made, involving eight fires, race clearly is not the motive, and in at least three of the remaining four cases the motive remains unclear.

In an effort to provide reporters with a more precise picture, the Justice Department has—presumably unintentionally—exaggerated the scope of the problem. Not only does the department's list include a number of fires that were determined to have been caused by accidents, along with incidents that were not fires or that took place in states far removed from the area of principal threat, but its descriptions of arson fires at black churches do not reveal where evidence indicates that racism was not the motive. For instance, the list notes that on July 3, 1992, the black Progressive Baptist Church in New Orleans burned, and that an arrest was made, but does not note that the person arrested was, according to a New Orleans fire investigator, Charles Vedros, "a black female, a vagrant," with a history of setting candle fires in rest rooms. The listing for the July 20, 1994, torching of the black Springfield Baptist Church, in Madison, Georgia, reports that four men were convicted of burglary and arson in this burning and also in the burning of the Elam Baptist Church that night, but this glosses over evidence that would steer a reporter away from a racial hypothesis. The four men had been engaged in a crime spree across several counties and over several days, during which they had vandalized and burned a number of white churches before hitting Springfield Baptist, the oldest black church in the county. Elam Baptist, which is in the next county, and which the vandals struck just before burning Springfield Baptist, is a white church. "They were just on a spree to vandalize any empty building they came across," the Morgan County sheriff, Ken Pritchett, says. "These folks had never seen this church before, never been to Morgan County before. They had no knowledge it was a black church."

Several state fire marshals in the South, concerned by what they believe are misimpressions created by the national media and by politicians, have analyzed their own records, and the picture they draw of what has been happening over the past five years is quite different. Alabama is a case in point. There the state fire marshal's office has investigated thirty-eight churches that have been destroyed or damaged by fire since 1990. Thirty-four of them have been classified as arson and four as "undetermined, suspicious." The fires have followed no clear racial pattern. "Of the thirty-four known arsons, we have made arrests in twenty cases," Alabama's Fire Marshal John Robison says. "We have arrested thirty-two suspects in those twenty cases. With regard to the black-church fires, we have arrested four blacks and seven whites. With regard to the white-church fires, we have arrested five blacks and sixteen whites. Of the known motives in the twenty cases, we have ten attempts to conceal the crime of burglary and/or theft, four acts of vandalism, two firefighters setting fires so they can put them out and be the big hero, one juvenile fascinated by fire, and one case where the suspects were drunk and just decided to burn down the first building they came across."

On May 21st, the House Judiciary Committee held a hearing on the subject of the church fires in the Southeast. Congressional hearings these days are often rancorous and partisan affairs, but this one was almost serene in its unanimity of tone. Speaker after speaker deplored the church burnings, recalled the horror of Birmingham, and denounced the racist white society that had created a new Birmingham. One who was particularly eloquent was Richard Land, the president of the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. About halfway through his lengthy prepared remarks, while bloviating on the question of whether morality can be legislated, Land recalled some words of John F. Kennedy: "President Kennedy once reminded us that the great enemy of truth is often not the lie, deliberate, contrived, and dishonest, but the myth, persistent, pervasive, and unrealistic."

Land's point is apposite, if inadvertently so. The story that has been told of the black-church burnings is more a myth than a lie—a large fiction spun out of a smaller truth. The acts of a relatively few misfits and miscreants in the night cannot be equated with the vast and purposeful campaign of terror directed against black citizens in the South during the civil-rights struggle. That was a true conspiracy. The white men who committed the bombings and the beatings and the murders of 1963 did so with the knowledge that they had an entire ideology, and an entire system, behind them. They knew that they were backed by a political and social structure that would speak in defense—or, at least, in mitigation—of their wretched acts. They knew that, in at least some areas, they could count on police who would not try too diligently to catch them, prosecutors who would not try too hard to bring them to justice, and judges and juries of their white peers who would not lose much sleep in acquitting them.

No institutional oppression of this sort exists in America today. To create a myth that it does—that nothing has changed—is a disservice to history, to the generations of whites who have labored to rid themselves of racism, and, above all, to the thousands of brave people who risked their lives fighting, and defeating, the real thing. It is to pretend that Martin Luther King accomplished nothing on that day in 1963. ♦

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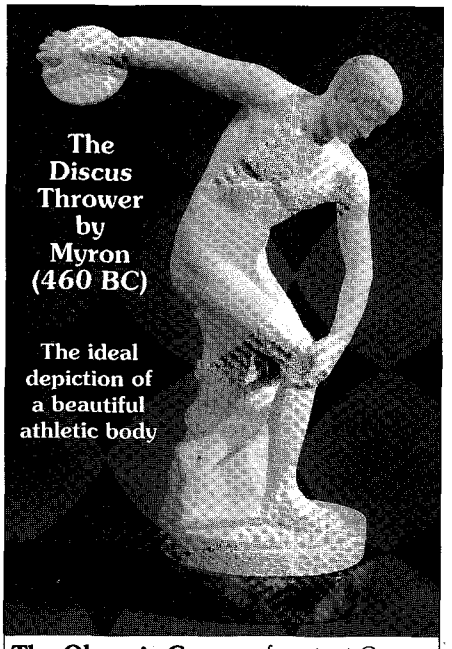

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LETTER FROM LITTLE ROCK

THE ILLEGAL LOAN

Where is Kenneth Starr headed in his investigation of the President? The first Whitewater trial may offer some clues.

BY JAMES B. STEWART

It has been four years since the first story about a defunct land deal involving Bill Clinton appeared in the *Times*, briefly jarring his Presidential candidacy and leading to a seemingly endless series of investigations, by lawyers and the media, into the Clintons' legal and political doings as first family of Arkansas. In the current campaign season, the independent counsel Kenneth Starr is three weeks into the second Whitewater trial in Little Rock, in a case involving possibly illegal banking practices tied to contributions to Clinton's 1990 gubernatorial campaign. The President is not a defendant in this trial, nor was he in the first—a case involving a variety of fraud and conspiracy charges, including some related to a fraudulent loan, backed by the Small Business Administration in Arkansas, in 1986. Nevertheless, it is becoming increasingly clear that Starr's investigation, in its pursuit of a number of former Clinton cronies, is heading toward the President himself. Throughout the Whitewater saga, one former friend of Clinton's in particular has proved problematic: Jim McDougal, the loquacious and volatile former owner of Madison Guaranty Savings & Loan.

The first Whitewater trial ended with the conviction of McDougal, his former wife, Susan, and Governor Jim Guy Tucker—a decision that came as a shock to the defendants and a surprise to the Clintons and numerous other observers. Many reporters were predicting that Susan, at the very least, would be acquitted. Her former husband had insisted on taking the stand—for the specific purpose, he testified, of "exonerating" her. The judge in the case, George Howard, Jr., had already dismissed four of the eight counts against her. Those that remained—bank fraud, mail fraud, making false statements to a financial institution, and falsification of banking records—all dealt with her purported advertising business, Master Marketing. On April 28th, President Clinton had testified, under subpoena from the McDougals' lawyers, on videotape from the White House about the circumstances of a three-hundred-thousand-dollar loan that David Hale, a Little Rock small-business lender, had made to Master Marketing in 1986. The defense intended to place the prestige and credibility of the Presidency behind their clients, and Clinton had seemingly made a persuasive case. He unequivocally contradicted Hale's testimony, claiming that he had never met with Hale and McDougal to discuss the loan and that he had not even known of its existence. A White House aide described the President's videotaped testimony as hitting a "home run."

By the time the case went to the jury, on May 16th, Kenneth Starr was being widely portrayed as a Republican partisan beset with conflicts of interest, and the lawyers in the independent counsel's office seemed to have their backs to the wall. But on May 28th Susan was found guilty on all four of the Master Marketing counts, and Jim was found guilty of eighteen of the nineteen felonies with which he was charged. Governor Tucker was convicted on one count of conspiracy and one count of mail fraud, and immediately announced that he would resign.

After the trial, Jim McDougal moved back into a mobile home in a quiet, leafy neighborhood in Arkadelphia, a short walk from Ouachita Baptist University, where he and Susan had met in the mid-seventies, when she was a nineteen-year-old student and he was teaching political science. Though customized with wood siding and a bow window, the home is sparsely furnished and the stair rail to the front porch is collapsing. Jim himself, though, looked none the worse for his recent trial. When I visited him, the week after the verdicts, he greeted me wearing a panama hat and a dress shirt with banded collar and no tie. I had hoped that Susan would join us, but I was told that she was at her parents' home, in Camden, "shattered" by the verdict.

McDougal and I had dinner at the Fish Net restaurant, bypassing his favor-

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ite, the Western Sizzlin, in deference to elevated cholesterol. He said that he had been tired and short of breath lately, but that doses of nitroglycerin had helped sustain his concentration and energy during the trial. He was scheduled to have an angiogram at a Little Rock hospital the next morning, and he worried that he might need immediate surgery—even that he might not live to see his sentencing, scheduled for August 19th. (Doctors subsequently found no blockage.) McDougal is a popular figure among the young waitresses at the Fish Net and the Sizzlin, flirting and tipping generously. He told me that a high-school student had come up to him and asked if she could have her picture taken with him for the yearbook. "Don't your mommy and daddy know I'm a convicted felon?" he asked, and she replied, "My folks don't care. They said it's just politics."

McDougal was just beginning to confront the consequences of his conviction. Nevertheless, he told me, he had thoroughly enjoyed the trial and his role at center stage. He had helped to shape his defense, he said, and he had lingered outside the courthouse each day to chat with the media. The night of the verdict, he appeared on "Larry King Live" wearing a pale-blue tie and a cream-colored vest with lapels, and had graciously, if incongruously, commented on the care the jurors had given to their deliberation.

I HAD gone back to Arkansas to try to make sense of the Whitewater trial. After reading some four dozen volumes of transcript in Little Rock, it seemed to me that, contrary to White House assertions, the case was far from having nothing to do with the President. As W. Ray Jahn, a longtime Assistant United States Attorney in Texas who is Starr's associate and acted as chief prosecutor, said in his summation, President Clinton was not on trial and wasn't charged with any wrongdoing. Yet the prosecution had gone to great lengths in its questioning of the President and of the other witnesses—lengths that may not have been necessary simply for the conviction of the McDougals and Tucker. Starr and Jahn decline to comment on the implications of their questions, or on what they believe the evidence will eventually show.

But from the transcript one can begin to get an idea of the possibilities the lawyers in the independent counsel's office feel they have to explore as far as they can: that in 1986 Governor Bill Clinton discussed getting a loan for the sham company Master Marketing with McDougal and David Hale, and that part of the loan's proceeds were intended to buy, in Whitewater's name, a valuable piece of property that would be co-owned by the Clintons and the McDougals. The Clintons have rightly said that they never made any money on Whitewater, but the facts brought forth in the first trial reveal that, at least when the loan was conceived, as Whitewater's co-owners they stood to benefit financially from it. According to this scenario, Clinton's motive would have been simple: he would have gained co-ownership of a potentially valuable asset without putting up any additional money. Should this theory be borne out, it would implicate Clinton in a crime: conspiracy to defraud a financial institution.

No one expects any charges against

Faces at the first trial, clockwise from top left: David Hale, Judge Howard, W. Ray Jahn, Sam Heuer, Jim McDougal, Bobby McDaniel, Susan McDougal, and Governor Tucker.

MICHAEL CRAWFORD

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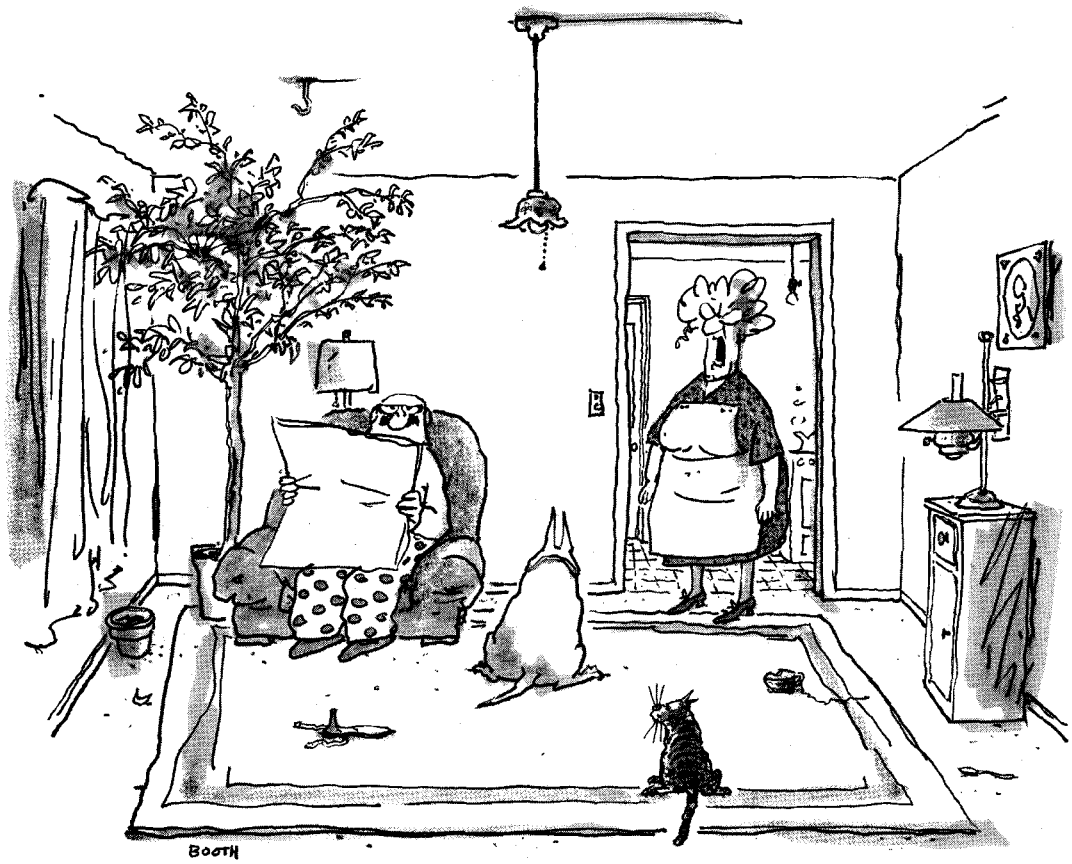

"I decided to spend the money and have my legs waxed."

• •

the President to rest on a single count, or even on this transaction alone. And proving such a theory, of course, is a far cry from merely outlining it. Although it wouldn't be necessary to show that the President actually benefitted, the special prosecutor would have to prove that Clinton acted with the intent to defraud and that he actually did something to further the conspiracy. Since everyone seems to agree—at this stage, at least—that there is nothing in writing, and that Clinton did not sign any loan documents, the only available direct evidence may be the testimony of the other participants, all of whom are now convicted felons with impaired credibility.

Furthermore, the prosecutors are keenly aware of the political ramifications of their inquiry. Even if Starr had grounds for recommending criminal charges, it is highly unlikely that he would do so before the November election. Starr says he intends to abide by the traditional practice of the Justice Department and take into account the effect of any charges on the electoral process. "That's a powerful counsel for restraint," he told me in an interview at his headquarters in suburban Little Rock. Nevertheless, as he says, "We want the facts. It's in the interest of the nation." Though he has resisted calls to take a leave of absence from his law firm, he is working nearly full time on the over-all investigation, which encompasses Whitewater, another McDougal development venture called Castle Grande, the White House travel-office firings, Vincent Foster's death, and, now, the possible misuse of confidential F.B.I. files.

THERE would be no Whitewater scandal—and Jim and Susan McDougal would never have been on trial—if McDougal hadn't talked to Jeff Gerth, of the *Times*, in 1992.

McDougal was the youngest person ever elected to Arkansas's Democratic State Committee (at age twenty). He worked on the Kennedy Presidential campaign, joined Senator John McLellan's staff in Washington, and ran Senator J. William Fulbright's successful 1968 campaign. Fulbright once said he liked McDougal because he could write a good speech and "buy three watermelons at a good price." In 1968, McDougal says, he asked for some campaign help, and an aide to Fulbright replied, "I'll send this Clinton boy out to help you." McDougal has seen himself ever since as a mentor to Clinton, whom he viewed, he once told me, as "an amiable fuckup who needed help." Hillary and Bill Clinton attended Susan and Jim's wedding, in 1976 (Clinton often referred to Susan by a nickname he'd coined: Child Bride), and in 1978, when Clinton was Attorney General of Arkansas, the two couples embarked on their investment in what was later incorporated as the Whitewater Development Company. It was only one of many real-estate developments the McDougals were involved in. In 1986, their entire financial mini-empire, which by then relied on dubious S. & L. loans, crumbled; the couple split up; Jim, who had had a history of alcoholism, was found to be a manic-depressive. He was subsequently tried and acquitted on charges of bank fraud, and found himself living a meagre existence on medical-disability checks.

McDougal once told me that his mother, Lorene, was a fervent admirer of Clinton, and that in 1990, a few months before her death, the Governor called her to cheer her up, saying that he had a job for her son. But no job offer was forthcoming, and McDougal brooded about it. So when Gerth, the *Times* reporter, called, just as the 1992 Democratic primary campaign was about to heat up, McDougal decided to spill the Whitewater story. He told Gerth that he had carried the Clintons financially on Whitewater, and had done other financial favors for them over the years. He implied that these favors had, in some measure, been returned.

McDougal explains that he'd learned in Alcoholics Anonymous that he had to "get the anger behind him"; that he did so in this case by talking to Gerth; and that it worked. "I'm square with Clinton," he says now. He adds, somewhat

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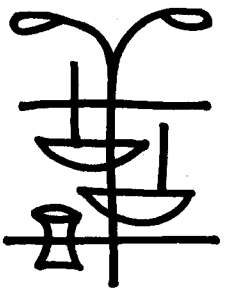
pathetically, that he was "thrilled" by his recent visit to the White House to hear the President's videotaped testimony. The President sought him out at every break, he says, and put an arm around his shoulder. "I believe he really does like me, and cares about me," McDougal says.

When McDougal took the witness stand himself, he was still a friend to Clinton, and was expected to tell, under oath, the same story as the President. Yet his continuing ambivalence and unpredictability, and the effect his medical problems have had on his memory, were abundantly in evidence. Despite his efforts to align himself with the President, he contradicted important points in Clinton's testimony. Indeed, he proved one of the trial's most effective witnesses—for the prosecution.

MASTER MARKETING represents only a narrow slice of what has become known as Whitewater, but it illustrates in microcosm what the scandal is thought to be about: false representations, fraudulent loans, and financial favors, with taxpayers the ultimate victims. Master Marketing was conceived in late 1985 or early 1986, ostensibly as an advertising agency to be owned and run by Susan McDougal, who was already handling ads for the McDougal real-estate developments. Susan herself, clad in revealing outfits, had appeared in many of the television ads, thereby becoming known in Arkansas as "the lady in the hot pants." As a former teen-age contestant in Arkadelphia beauty pageants, she had been captivated by the urbane McDougal, who was by then politically influential in Arkansas. The two had embarked on what Susan considered a bold adventure in life: borrowing money for a European honeymoon, buying and selling land across the state, working in the Clinton Administration in Little Rock, buying a bank and moving to Kingston, Arkansas, and, finally, buying an S. & L., which they rechristened the Madison Guaranty Savings & Loan Association. Their banking ventures, the coffers swollen by federally insured deposits, financed steadily bigger and more speculative real-estate developments. But by early 1986 their cash flow had dwindled. Their marriage was foundering, though their separation was not acrimonious and they have remained close.

Whatever their original intentions for Master Marketing, the company never materialized. It didn't even have a checking account, much less clients, when Susan and Jim decided to approach David Hale for a substantial loan—one that would help stave off their intensifying cash-flow crisis.

Long before Hale attained his current notoriety as a character in the Whitewater drama, he was a figure of some note in Little Rock as a prosecuting lawyer and active Democrat. The son of a poor farmer, he enrolled at the University of Arkansas in the late nineteen-fifties and became an Acacia fraternity brother of McDougal's. Hale was the national president of the Jaycees when he first met Clinton. He eventually became a municipal judge in Little Rock, and served as a member of the United States Bicentennial Commission and the United States Council on Inflation. One of Hale's many sources of income was a lending operation, Capital Management Services, which was licensed by the Small Business Administration. The S.B.A. had set out to authorize loans to small-business owners, including those considered "disadvantaged," such as Vietnam veterans and members of racial minorities. Hale, however, shamelessly operated C.M.S. for his own benefit and that of his friends in the political and business élite of Arkansas. He testified that McDougal told him loans were needed to "clean up some members of the political family." Asked by Jahn to whom he thought the phrase "political family" referred, Hale said, "Bill Clinton, and maybe some of his aides, and some of Jim's political associates, and Jim Guy Tucker."



According to his testimony, Hale had already agreed to lend the McDougals money when, in January or February of 1986, he made a visit to McDougal's mobile-home office at Castle Grande, situated on 145th Street about eight miles southeast of downtown Little Rock. This alleged visit has been a subject of controversy ever since Hale first mentioned it, in 1993, in interviews he gave to reporters while trying to negotiate a plea bargain. Clinton testified on videotape that no such meeting took place—a contradiction that led many to portray the case as a test of Hale's credibility versus the President's.

Ray Jahn, the prosecutor, pressed Hale, Clinton, and McDougal to try to determine if in fact Clinton could have been at the meeting. Under Jahn's prodding, Hale described the meeting this way: "I received a call from Jim McDougal to meet he and Governor Clinton at the Castle Grande office after work . . . to talk about getting their loan ready and consummated, and we met at the Castle Grande office, in Jim's office."

Jahn interrupted, saying, "Can you stop for a second? Do you remember the time of day that it was?"

"It was dark. I don't remember what time of day it was."

"Do you remember what the weather was like or anything?"

"Pretty chilly." (Later, under cross-examination, Hale added the detail that Clinton was casually dressed, in "perhaps a jogging outfit.")

"Was anyone else present?" Jahn asked.

"I did not see anybody. I don't know whether—"

"Well, when you arrived, did you notice any cars in the parking lot?"

"Jim's Jaguar was there."

"O.K. Any other cars?"

"I don't remember. If there was, I don't remember."

"All right. What happened once you arrived?"

"I went in, and Jim and the Governor were standing and were basically cussing Frank White"—a former Republican governor—"and talking politics and this sort of thing, just general conversation that you'd have around two politicians anytime when they're talking politics."

Hale went on to testify that after a round of small talk McDougal introduced the subject of Master Marketing, but didn't use the name. "Jim said, 'You know, what I want to do is, we're going to put this in Susan's advertising company.' "

"Put what?" Jahn asked.

"Put the loan."

"O.K. Which is a conversation then about a loan?"

"Yes, sir. It was about a loan for Jim and the Governor."

Hale testified that McDougal had previously mentioned that "they needed

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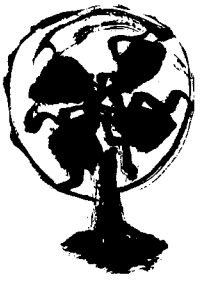
a hundred and fifty thousand," without mentioning what they needed the money for, and that McDougal then said, "We're going to want to put the loan in Susan's advertising company." Hale went on, ". . . And I said, 'Well, that will be fine.' And we were discussing it, you know. He was talking about getting the proposal ready, the proposal for the loan ready, and then I don't remember just exactly how the discussion came about, but security was mentioned and—and the Governor mentioned that they could provide a security interest in some raw land in Marion County," the site of the Whitewater development.

Hale continued, "At one point when we were talking about how we would structure it and put it in Susan's name, the Governor said, 'Be sure,' he said. 'My name cannot show up on this.' And McDougal said, 'I've already taken care of that.' "

Significantly, Hale didn't claim that Clinton "pressured" him to make the loan, as had been widely reported. Hale testified that he had already agreed to lend McDougal some money by the time the alleged meeting took place, and that when McDougal later called to raise the figure to three hundred thousand dollars he quickly agreed.

Clinton, in his videotaped testimony, said that he had visited McDougal's trailer at Castle Grande on only one occasion, in June of 1986, and worn a jacket and tie. On cross-examination by Jahn, the President adamantly added, "I never pressured David Hale to make a loan, just like I never ran in my jogging shorts out to 145th Street to see him in the cold. I know that I never did that." The idea that Clinton would have run all the way out to Castle Grande, in particular, made Hale's version seem unlikely.



But Jahn countered with a persistent line of questioning which suggested another possibility: that Clinton ran in his jogging suit that day to Madison Guaranty's office and met McDougal there, and that McDougal drove him in his Jaguar to the office at Castle Grande—a sequence of events that would have taken place in public, and so might be corroborated more easily than the alleged meeting.

After getting the President to acknowledge that McDougal's office at Madison Guaranty was only a short distance from the Governor's Mansion, Jahn asked him, "There would be nothing, then, to prevent you from either jogging, walking, or driving from the Mansion to Mr. McDougal's office, is there, sir?"

"I could go to Mr. McDougal's office whenever I wished," Clinton replied.

"That's right. And then there would be nothing that would prevent you from getting in Mr. McDougal's car and driving anywhere you wanted to, was there, sir?"

"That would be highly unusual."

"Well, I'm asking you, sir, was there anything that would prevent you from doing it?"

"I don't recall ever doing it."

"Well, but sir, but I'm asking you, if you would, sir, the question is, was there anything that would prevent you from doing it?"

Jahn continued with this seemingly hypothetical line of questioning, and Clinton expressed puzzlement.

Finally, the President said, "If you want to ask me about a specific example and if something happened, I will be glad to answer that. I have told you that I frequently ran on Main Street. On a couple of occasions, I went into Mr. McDougal's office at the savings-and-loan. I felt free to see him whenever I wished to. Now, I don't know how else to answer your question. I have no recollection of riding anywhere in a car with him. If you think that there is a time when I did that or you want to ask me about it, sir, I will be glad to try to answer it, but I'm doing my best to tell you the truth, and all you're asking me to do is speculate."

But Jahn persisted: "No, sir. All I'm asking you to do is to admit to the jury, sir, that there is no physical law, no spiritual law, no inconsistency that would prevent you from getting in Mr. McDougal's car and driving anywhere that you wanted to back in 1985 and 1986. That's all I'm asking you."

"Well, and I explained to you what the facts were, what my practice was. Could I physically do it without anyone restraining me? Yes, I could have done that."

"O.K."

"Was it my practice to do it? The answer to that is no."

"So, the answer is, there was no reason why you couldn't have done it, as far as no physical prevention, no moral prevention, no logical prevention that would have prevented you from having done it. Is that correct?"

"There was a logical reason not to do it. . . . Depending on where we were going. But nobody— I wasn't in handcuffs and chains, if that's what you are asking. No, I could have physically done it."

"Is there a reason you didn't want to answer that question?" Jahn asked.

"I didn't understand it," Clinton replied.

"Oh, I'm sorry."

"I still don't."

McDougal, in his testimony, denied that he had ever used the phrase "political family" with Hale and that he had attended a meeting with both Clinton and Hale, and on this point he and the President told much the same story. Still, McDougal did contradict the President in one regard: under cross-examination by Jahn, who produced an earlier statement McDougal had made, he said that Clinton had visited him at Castle Grande several times, not just once, as recalled by Clinton.

Jahn was evidently more interested in the Clinton connection to Master Marketing than the jurors were. Many of them ultimately deemed Clinton's putative meeting with Hale to be irrelevant; there was documentary evidence to show that the loan was fraudulent and that other crimes were committed, even if no such meeting had taken place.

The prosecutors even discussed naming the President as an unindicted co-conspirator. That would have enabled them to introduce Hale's widely reported hearsay account of bumping into Governor Clinton at the statehouse, where, Hale alleged, Clinton urged him to make a loan to "help Jim and I out." But, besides being politically explosive, naming the President would have required the prosecutors to present a "preponderance of evidence" linking Clinton to the alleged conspiracy—a step "we weren't prepared to take," Jahn says.

USING the proceeds of the Master Marketing loan for its ostensible purpose—financing an advertising business—never seems to have been seriously contemplated by the McDougals. They were real-estate developers, and among the possible uses for the money was a

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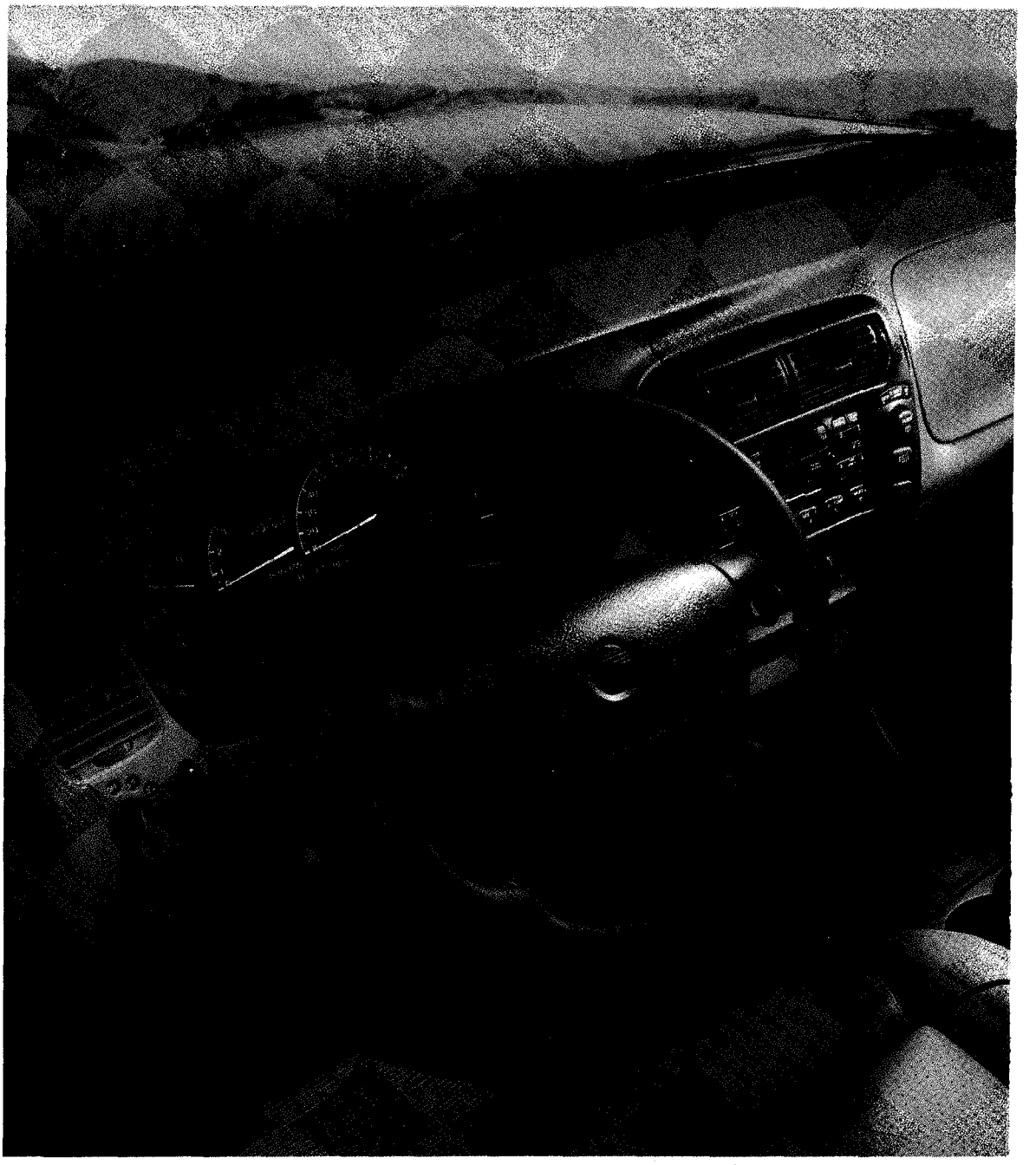

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new development for the faltering Whitewater.

As the fiscal year came to a close in May of 1985, only one Whitewater lot had been sold, and the development's negative cash flow, all of it funded by the McDougals, had exceeded seventy-five thousand dollars. Jim McDougal, presumably desperate to reduce Whitewater's debt, sold all the remaining lots to the Ozark Air Service, owned by a real-estate agent named Chris Wade, in return for a Piper Seminole airplane. The list price for these lots was some two hundred thousand dollars; the plane was worth a fraction of that price. Wade also assumed thirty-five thousand dollars of Whitewater's debt, though the McDougals and the Clintons remained liable to the bank for the full amount of the loan—more than ninety-five thousand dollars. McDougal himself received twenty-five thousand dollars from the sale of the plane later that summer. The trade nearly stripped Whitewater of its remaining assets, leaving only deeds held against the notes payable owed by installment purchasers.

On November 14, 1985, Whitewater was cited in the Marion County newspaper, the Yellville *Mountain Echo*, in its annual list of delinquent taxpayers. According to McDougal, Clinton was furious. He recalls Clinton saying, "You know that's political suicide. Hillary is mad as hell. This cannot happen."

McDougal claims he saw the outburst as an opportunity to extricate the Clintons from Whitewater while saving face himself. "Let's just get you out of this," he says he urged Clinton, telling him euphemistically that the best that could be hoped for was that Whitewater would "break even." According to McDougal, Clinton embraced the idea: " 'Fine with me,' he said. 'Just run it by Hillary, would you?' " Armed with stock-transfer certificates, Susan once told me, she called on Hillary at her office in the Rose law firm. According to Susan, Hillary showed no sign that her husband had discussed the matter with her and angrily rebuffed the idea of relinquishing their ownership. Given that the Clintons would remain liable for the original mortgage, this reaction made some sense. As Susan later recounted their conversation, Hillary said, "Jim told me that this was going to pay for college for Chelsea. I still expect it to do that." Susan said that she immediately reported the incident to McDougal.

The only way Whitewater could break even, let alone turn a profit, was by starting a new venture, and in the months before lining up the loan from Hale's Capital Management Services the McDougals had been eying a large tract of land southeast of Little Rock which was owned by the International Paper Company. According to Jim, Susan did much of the negotiating for the land. The McDougals signed a contract for Whitewater to pay five hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the International Paper land, which they intended to divide into lots for mobile homes. The contract, dated March 4, 1986, and signed by Jim and Susan as the president and the secretary of Whitewater, called for a down payment of $80,190, twenty-five thousand of which was due well before the closing, as "earnest money," with the balance to be financed by two promissory notes to International Paper covered by a mortgage on the property.

But by the time of the closing, in October, the McDougals had suffered a series of reversals. Jim and Susan had separated. Federal Home Loan Bank Board investigators had found Madison Guaranty to be nearly insolvent, and in June they wrote to the Madison board of directors, demanding a meeting. That same month, Jim was rushed to the hospital after a seizure and was diagnosed as manic-depressive. When he came out of the hospital, he was ousted from his post at Madison Guaranty. His secretary, Sue Strayhorn, testified that McDougal now described the International Paper deal as "a source of survival."

To that end, McDougal moved to get the Clintons out of Whitewater. He mailed them a Whitewater stock transfer, dated October 1, 1986, making no mention of the impending International Paper purchase. The Clintons once more refused to sign the transfer, again citing the fact that they would remain liable for Whitewater's bank loan. Nonetheless, the McDougals executed the International Paper deal on October 5th, and the land became a Whitewater asset.

Although they might have preferred to buy the land through an entity wholly owned by them, contractually the McDougals were stuck with using Whitewater for the purchase. In a letter dated November 14th, McDougal tried yet again to persuade the Clintons to relinquish their share in Whitewater: "I was motivated to send you a stock transfer by two factors. First, I wanted to get you out of the company because of the high potential for embarrassment to you. Secondly, I had hoped to be able to take advantage of the $90,000.00 loss for tax purposes since Susan and I have in large measure contributed to the company the funds necessary to cover these losses." The letter contains no mention of the International Paper land. In any event, the letter proved unpersuasive; the Clintons still refused to budge. On December 1st, McDougal transferred Lorrance Heights—as he and Susan had named the International Paper tract—out of Whitewater and into the Great Southern Land Company, their own company. The Clintons had been co-owners of the land for only seven weeks. In late December, McDougal left Little Rock to undergo medical treatment in California.

It's obvious from the line of questioning at the trial that the independent counsel suspects that the reason the McDougals sought the Master Marketing loan, at least in part, was to help finance the International Paper transaction. The counsel may also suspect that the International Paper land is what Clinton, McDougal, and Hale were discussing at the meeting that Hale claims took place at Castle Grande, since Hale also testified that a new land deal was mentioned there. This theory requires that Clinton knew of the planned acquisition, and that Jim and Susan bought the land for Whitewater, rather than for one of their many other development companies, to benefit the Clintons.

Clinton, however, testified that he did not know about any of the three crucial steps McDougal had taken in Whitewater's name: the sale of the lots to Wade; the purchase of the land from International Paper; or the transfer of that property to Great Southern. Because only the second—the land purchase—was funded by the fraudulent loan from Hale, it is the only one of the three that is tied to a criminal act.

Clinton's testimony that he did not know that McDougal had sold White-

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water's real estate to Wade is plausible. The Clintons' refusal to give up their stake suggests that they still thought there was something worth holding on to. The Clintons have maintained all along that they didn't follow the day-to-day financing of Whitewater during those years, and the available documentary evidence supports them.

There is also a good reason to believe that McDougal didn't tell either of the Clintons he had unilaterally taken the land out of Whitewater and put it into a company owned solely by Susan and him. Because this mortgage, too, could not be transferred, Whitewater continued to hold the debt while the McDougals' company had the land. At the time of the transfer, McDougal signed an agreement making himself liable for the debt on the International Paper land, but only in the event that Whitewater first defaulted on its payments. In other words, McDougal, his finances shattered, may have attempted to cheat his business partners.

On the crucial second step—the contract to buy the International Paper land for Whitewater—Clinton's testimony that he knew nothing about the planned purchase was, to a point, corroborated by McDougal. McDougal said that when he signed the contract to buy the land for Whitewater he believed that the Clintons had relinquished their stake. But here aspects of McDougal's account strain credulity. McDougal must have been aware of Hillary Clinton's refusal to sign the stock transfer, and the October 1st letter seeking a stock transfer from the Clintons is evidence that McDougal knew then that the Clintons were co-owners.

In his questioning, Jahn made clear his own view that the International Paper contract could have been intended as a favor to the Governor, and elicited the following testimony from McDougal: "We wouldn't have been putting this very valuable piece of land that we made a down payment of a hundred and ten thousand dollars on into a company that we didn't think we owned all of."

"Unless, of course," Jahn retorted, "you were going to be generous to your business partner, William Jefferson Clinton. Is that correct, sir?"

"I don't understand the question."

" . . .Were you being generous to Mr. Clinton in conducting or continuing to conduct a business in the name of Whitewater Development Corporation?"

"No, sir."

"O.K. Were you being honorable to Mr. and Mrs. Clinton, your business partners, in continuing to conduct business in the name of Whitewater Development Corporation?"

"Yes, sir."

Jahn also elicited testimony that McDougal may have believed he had a reason to be generous. On March 4, 1986—the day the International Paper contract happened to go into effect—McDougal met with Clinton and officials from the Arkansas Health Department in the Governor's office to ask them to look into his complaint that another of his projects, Maple Creek Farms, was handled unfairly by the department's inspectors. After the meeting, which Clinton had set up at McDougal's request, three state employees whom McDougal had bitterly criticized were assigned to other projects. However, Health Department officials deny that they gave McDougal any special treatment, and say that the Governor specifically urged them not to do so; they also say that such transfers of personnel were routine when a developer complained.

Moreover, Jahn got McDougal to call into question his own testimony that the Clintons knew nothing about the International Paper transaction. During cross-examination, Jahn said to McDougal, "I'm trying to find out what information you conveyed to the Clintons, sir, at the time that you and Mrs. McDougal decided to transfer Lorrance Heights from the Whitewater Development Corporation to the Great Southern Land Corporation."

"If that's what you want to know," McDougal replied, "I don't recall specifically what I said to . . . probably to Mrs. Clinton."

"In fact, sir, you didn't tell him anything, did you?"

"I don't . . ."

"Pardon?"

"I said I don't know that."

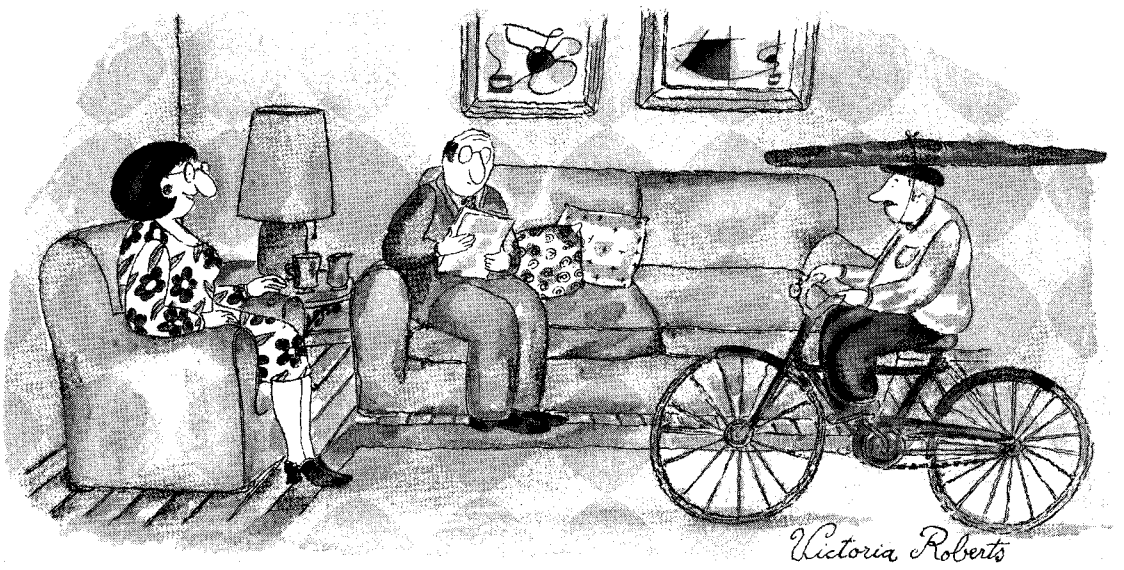
"You didn't tell him of any transfer in, you didn't tell him of any transfer out, did you, sir?"

"It was discussed, I believe. I don't recall the specific words that we used."

"But it was never reduced to writing, was it, sir?"

"No, sir."

Jahn did not resolve the discrepancies between McDougal's shifting explanations about International Paper and Clinton's steady insistence he knew nothing about it. One possibility, of course, is that any discussions of the land deal could never be put in writing, not because they never happened, as Clinton testified, but because Clinton's name couldn't be linked to a fraudulently funded effort to increase the failed venture's worth. It is also possible that



"I just dialled 1-800-BAGUETTE."

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the Clintons didn't want to give up their share in Whitewater in 1986 because they knew of the International Paper acquisition and expected it to make money. But equally plausible is that McDougal, in financial distress and angry over the Clintons' obstinacy, simply seized the land for himself and Susan.

UNDER Susan McDougal's management, lots at the International Paper project sold briskly during 1987. To clear a path from the highway and put in a road, Susan hired R. D. Randolph, a contractor who had worked closely with the McDougals on many of their developments, and who was also a friend and political supporter of Clinton. During this period, Clinton appears to have been in regular contact with Susan. McDougal, during our seafood dinner in June, said that "Bill Clinton was constantly calling Susan" while she was working at the International Paper site.

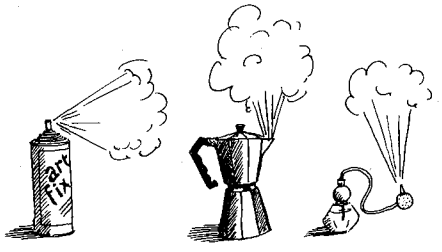
Jahn seemed to go out of his way to ask Clinton about his relationship with Randolph—someone who has not previously been seen as playing a significant role in the Whitewater affair. Clinton testified that, as Governor, he "might well have" helped Randolph obtain a state job. Later on, Jahn, perhaps attempting to discover just how much Clinton knew about the Lorrance Heights development, asked the President if McDougal had ever talked to him about hiring R. D. Randolph to do work there. Clinton replied, "I knew that R. D. Randolph worked with Jim McDougal. I don't believe I knew what he did."

(Later, Jahn asked the President if, in 1992, when the Gerth article about Whitewater appeared in the *Times*, he had asked Randolph to get McDougal "to stop talking to the press." This testimony was edited out of the President's videotape by the court, and was only recently made public. Clinton responded, after a round of objections, "My recollection is that I asked R.D. if he knew what was going on, if he knew how Jim was doing, and if he knew what had motivated the article. And I might have asked him to, you know, talk to him and see if we could have no further damaging articles, but I don't remember exactly what I said. Certainly I don't remember that I asked him to go see him." For his part, McDougal told the Arkansas *Democrat-Gazette* that Randolph did come to see him, but did not tell him to stop talking to reporters.)

NONE of the money from the sales of the International Paper property found its way into the Whitewater bank account. The McDougals' Great Southern Land Company also had trouble turning a profit on the investment: after forty-eight purchasers filed suit alleging that the McDougals had failed to provide agreed-upon services, all sales proceeds were put in escrow, thereby crippling the McDougals' efforts to use the money to pay off any other debts, including Whitewater's. In April of 1987, the first payment of interest on the three-hundred-thousand-dollar Master Marketing loan came due. Susan couldn't come up with the money. Still maintaining the pretense that Master Marketing was a functioning advertising agency, she wrote Hale, "Because of the fluctuation between payment of media expenses and reimbursement, it will be 30 to 60 days before I can make this payment to you." No payment materialized during that period, either. The Master Marketing loan went into default, and McDougal's last hope for "survival" had collapsed. None of the Master Marketing loan was ever repaid.

In September of 1988, after Whitewater defaulted on the International Paper note and the McDougals did not step in, International Paper began foreclosure proceedings on Lorrance Heights. They named the Whitewater Development Corporation and the McDougals as defendants. International Paper won a judgment of five hundred and fifteen thousand dollars, which was eventually satisfied by its regaining ownership of the development, along with a promise of payment for timber illegally cut from the land. Susan had already abandoned the project and moved to California.

The evidence against the McDougals with respect to Master Marketing was overwhelming. An F.B.I. agent named Michael Patkus testified that not one penny of the three-hundred-thousand-dollar loan ever found its way into any business called Master Marketing, and that nearly fifty thousand dollars was used for purposes connected with Whitewater. There was never any advertising agency, nor were there any clients. What's more, Hale testified that a month or two after the check was issued McDougal came to him and asked him to substitute another application for the loan. According to Hale, he took the document but warned McDougal that he couldn't eradicate the earlier application, since a form describing the business as an advertising agency had been filed with the Small Business Administration in Washington. The new application described Master Marketing as a "general purpose real estate brokerage and land development firm." This maneuver suggested that the McDougals knew the first application was false; nevertheless, the new form also misrepresented the way the proceeds of the loan would be used. Whitewater wasn't mentioned on either application. McDougal's own testimony placed him and Susan squarely at the center of the transaction.



NOW that the prosecutors have convicted the McDougals and Tucker, will they be able to "flip" them to testify against higher-ups? (Such testimony, of course, need not be confined to the activities or meetings referred to in the first trial.) The same question will apply to the defendants in the second trial, still in progress, if they are convicted. (The President will again testify by videotape.) Meanwhile, Bobby McDaniel, Susan McDougal's lawyer, says that she will not offer any coöperation in anticipation of sentencing. "I'm a fighter," McDaniel says. "Anyone who wants to go hat in hand"—to the government—"is not for me. Susan is not of the cut-and-run cloth." McDaniel professes strong support for President Clinton and says he is certain that his client has nothing to reveal about the President and "will not lie for leniency." "I'm a yellow-dog Democrat," he says. "I plead guilty to it, and I'm proud of it."

Sam Heuer, McDougal's lawyer, is also a Clinton supporter. After the President taped his testimony, Heuer and McDaniel were treated to a tour of the Oval Office and the Cabinet Room while the prosecutors were shown the door. Heuer's daughter has visited Chelsea Clinton in Washington, and Heuer considers Clinton a friend. He says that McDougal won't coöperate:

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"Let's face it. The President is and was the real target."

But in the aftermath of the verdict, McDougal's loyalty to the President seems to have been wavering. His feelings about Hillary Rodham Clinton are sharply at odds with his feelings about the President. At our fried-seafood dinner in Arkadelphia, McDougal noted peevishly that the First Lady made no effort to greet him when he went to the White House for the videotaping of the President's testimony. "There was not one word of sympathy or friendship toward me or Susan," he said. And McDougal went on to complain about how little backing, financial or otherwise, he received from the Democratic Party during his long legal ordeal, and said that he held out scant hope for any Presidential pardon. "I told Heuer, 'There's no reason to do anything for the Clintons, because they're not going to do a damn thing for us,' " he declared.

For prosecutors to proceed with any charges against Clinton related to Master Marketing, McDougal would have to change his testimony, further eroding his already damaged credibility. But if prosecutors found corroborating evidence (as they did with some aspects of Hale's disclosures about the McDougals) a case might be possible. McDougal, for his part, now says that he does have potentially valuable information concerning the President—not necessarily related to Master Marketing—which he says can be independently verified. He's been "holding back" something, he told me—information he can use when all other options have been exhausted.

The importance of that information, if it has any, remains to be seen, and so does the truth of the prosecutors' theories, which are only now beginning to be developed and tested. The trail may lead nowhere. But it seems safe to say that McDougal, having gained the spotlight as Clinton's nemesis (and currently facing a possible sentence of eighty-one years), is unlikely to relinquish it. ♦

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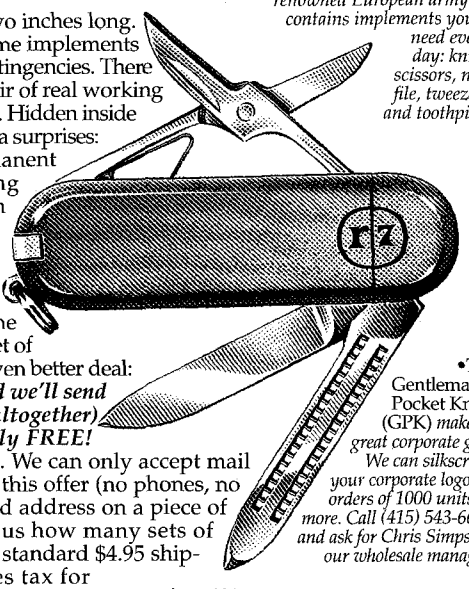

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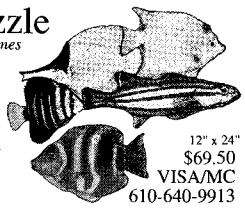

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ANNALS OF POPULAR CULTURE

BURIED ALIVE

Our children and the avalanche of crud.

BY DAVID DENBY

MAX, my older son, who just turned thirteen, once had a thick green carpet in his room, a tufted and matted shag that my wife and I inherited from the previous owners of our West End Avenue apartment, in New York. When Max was six or seven, we spent a good deal of time kneeling in the carpet, cleaning up his toys, and down there in the green we got to thinking about the moral nature of his education. Pennies, rubber bands, paper clips, marbles, peanut shells, dirty socks, toy soldiers, wooden blocks, G.I. Joes, crayons, dollops of synthetic slime—a sort of kiddies' bouillabaisse, a thickening brew of plastic and metallic stuff—gathered in the shag. It was the landscape of the American child.

One day, the carpet was covered with hundreds of pieces of plastic, and I sat among them, overwhelmed. A friend of Max's had just been over, and the boys had dumped boxes of toys on the floor. There were Legos, of course—the plugged and stamped modular pieces that fit together in innumerable combinations—but also the mobile olive-green figures of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, along with He-Man and Skeletor, and odd figures from "Sesame Street" and two or three toy groups I couldn't identify. On the floor was the plastic detritus of half a dozen . . . what? Not toys, exactly, but toy systems, many of which were also available as a television show or a movie, or both, with links to computer games, video-arcade games, comic books, regular children's books, clothes, and cereal boxes. Each part of the toy system sold another part, and so Max was encased in fantasy props—*stuff*—virtually to the limits of his horizon.

Idly, I extracted one of the superheroes from the carpet and broke off its arm.

TO my surprise, I find myself welcoming, or at least not opposing, the advent of the V-chip—the little device that is to be installed in new television sets sold from 1998 on and that will allow parents to block out programs they don't want their children to see. Many parents I know have similar feelings, and quite a few are surprised by the depths of their ambivalence and in some cases misery on the subject of the plastic on the carpet—upset by the way pop culture in all its forms has invaded their homes, and the habits, manners, and souls of their children. My friends are drawn from a small circle of well-educated New Yorkers; we are a fairly compact and no doubt privileged group. Yet our anguish about bringing up children is, I believe, widely shared by parents of all kinds. Child-rearing is at once the most prosaic and the most mesmerizing subject in the world. The nagging, repetitive tasks it requires—and the wrenching obsessions—reach across regional, class, and political lines. "Married . . . with Children" and the computer game Doom are the same in Montana and in Manhattan.

No one I know expects that the V-chip will make much difference. The chip is no more than a finger in a dike that has already sprung a thousand leaks. In the past two decades or so, pop has triumphed, defeating all but a few pockets of resistance, absorbing or marginalizing the older, "high" arts, humbling the schools, setting the tone for an entire society. The children live in it, but, of course, their parents also live in it, and this is part of the confusion. How can you fight what you enjoy yourself? I am a film critic and I see more than a hundred movies every year, which puts me in the worst possible position when I berate my children for watching too many movies. My wife, a novelist, loves the new crop of girl rockers. In our family, "The Simpsons" is a source of wonder and "The Empire Strikes Back" an endlessly repeated pleasure.

Even parents who enjoy their share of pop are feeling wary and sore, as if someone has made fools of them. And a few parents I know have given themselves over to bitter rage and are locked in an unwinnable struggle to shut out pop culture and the life of the streets—the two are now indistinguishable—from their children's experience. Acting out of fear and love, and perhaps out of spiritual ambition, too, they have turned themselves into authoritarians, banning television, banning many kinds of "unsuitable" movies. There is so much to forbid—perhaps a whole culture to forbid! And in so doing, these parents risk making the forbidden glamorous and dangerous; they risk cutting the children off from their friends and bringing them up as alienated strangers in the electronic world of the future.

I don't want to be like them, but I understand their absolutism. We are all in the same boat, afloat in the boundless sea. For both relaxed and authoritarian parents, the real issue is much larger than bad TV shows and movies. (There are always some good ones.) We all believe in "choice," but our children, to our chagrin, may no longer have the choice *not* to live in pop. For many of them, pop has become not just a piece of reality—a mass of diversions, either good or bad, brilliant or cruddy—but the very ground of reality. The danger is not mere exposure to occasional violent or prurient images but the acceptance of a degraded environment that devalues everything—a shadow world in which our kids are breathing an awful lot of poison without knowing that there's clean air and sunshine elsewhere. They are shaped by the media as consumers before they've had a chance to develop their souls.

The usual response to such complaints is a sigh or a shrug or, alternatively, exhortations like "Get tough with them. Take control of what they see, what they read and listen to." Parents who

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think of themselves as conservatives often say this, and their assumptions give them a tactical advantage: they don't have to make so many choices; they are more likely to establish inflexible general principles for what their children can see and do and to insist on parental authority regardless of any contrary evidence or argument. If sex is something children should not see in movies, that's the end of the discussion. Yet the issue is not so simple, especially for parents like me and my wife, who are not eager to stand over the children, guiding their progress all day long like missionaries leading the savages to light. To assume control over their habits and attitudes, we would have to become bullies.

In fact, our two boys are far from addicted to television, but like many American children they consider themselves entitled to a certain amount of TV and to video games and movies as well. As far as they are concerned, such pleasures come with the territory: consuming media, they think, is part of what children do. No doubt I should have been tougher with them; I should have made it clear when they were younger that watching TV was not an entitlement but a privilege. (The awful word makes me wince, but I'm sorry now that I didn't say it.) At this point, we are stuck with the usual compromise, which the children accept in principle: we establish limits—only so much TV, only certain movies, and so on. But there are always arguments, discussions, trades, and other negotiations, and we have come to realize that asserting control over the boys' tastes is no longer possible beyond a certain point. How can you control what they breathe?

FILIP PAGOWSKI

MANDATED as part of the Telecommunications Act (signed earlier this year), the V-chip is an attempt to give parents more control (or, realists would say, the illusion of control). At this moment, the Motion Picture Association of America, which has administered the movie ratings since 1968, is hoping to get a workable system in place by next January, a year before the V-chipped sets come out. Just like movies, television shows will be rated according to their suitability for children. Parents at home, using a secret code and a remote control, will set their new TVs at whatever rating level they are comfortable with. Any show rated above that level will automatically be shut out.

But how do you rate an endless sea? There are broadcast network and broadcast local shows, network cable and local cable shows, and public television, too: perhaps a thousand hours or more a day of programming. It is less a series of discrete shows than a nation's shared environment—our communal glop, our feed, our ether, our *medium*. Movies are currently rated by a group of thirteen Los Angeles-area citizens with experience as parents, but no group of ten, twenty, or fifty citizens, not even one chained to the spot like the inhabitants of Plato's cave, can sit and rate all the shows. What to do? Jack Valenti, who is the head of the M.P.A.A., and an industry advisory board have decided that the distributors of programming—networks, stations, cable operators—perhaps in consultation with the writers and producers of the shows, will assign the ratings to themselves.

Can the producers and distributors rate themselves? It seems a dubious procedure. In any case, the sheer amount of stuff overwhelms any rational attempt to assess it. Such criteria as intelligence, dramatic interest, and style will not play much of a role in the ratings. A few shows that I might want my older son to see are likely to receive the equivalent of an R—for instance, the occasional PBS series "Prime Suspect," made by England's Granada Television, and starring Helen Mirren as the London police detective Jane Tennison. One recent episode, "The Scent of Darkness," detailed with grim intensity and admirable British levelheadedness the pursuit and capture of a serial killer. Most of Tennison's colleagues doubt her judgment in the case, and the true subject of the episode—and of Mirren's performance—is the moral gallantry of a woman fighting the coldness of male contempt. Burrowing deep within its peculiar, mazelike world, the drama was so convincing and intelligent that when my older son drifted in, my wife and I let him watch. (We shooed away Thomas, who is nine.) Mirren's fierce, driving anger, her sense that she has an obligation not only to the job but to herself—an obligation not to betray herself—is the essence of modern heroism, and Max, who has seen his share of thoughtlessly violent movies and TV shows, was impressed. Afterward, we talked it over. He wanted to go deeper into the plot and the characters, to understand everyone's motives. With the V-chip in place, however, viewers unfamiliar with the

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"I'm sorry—the agency told me they'd cleared away last summer's people."

• •

special qualities of "Prime Suspect" will probably not let their thirteen-year-olds see it.

POP culture hardly takes up all of my sons' lives. Their school gives them plenty of work. They read, though not as much as we'd like. (We also read to them and tell them stories and bits of history constantly.) They play basketball, go snowboarding, collect things, make friends everywhere; Max blades and rides, and Thomas plays the piano. If we put on Toscanini's recording of Beethoven's Seventh, they twirl and jump around the living room and carom off the furniture. They seem busier and more active than I was at nine or thirteen. Nevertheless, their absorption in pop is very intense.

When Max is at home on a Saturday, or on vacation, he may hit the computer as soon as he gets up, ignoring repeated entreaties to eat breakfast, and finally ignoring bowls of cereal placed under his nose as he plays one of the war-strategy games that he currently loves—Caesar II, say, set in ancient Rome, or Warcraft II, in which the player, in charge of the Humans, builds forts, towns, farms, and mills, all for the purpose of defeating the unspeakable Orcs, ardent little creatures who attack from many sides and emit anguished groans as they are hacked, maced, and cannonaded into the world below. (Children with a taste for perversity can take the side of the Orcs, or two kids can play against each other.) Warcraft is a big advance in complexity over the point-and-shoot games like Wolfenstein 3-D or Doom, in which the player passes through three-dimensional corridors and mows down endless assailants. (In Wolfenstein, after killing all the S.S. guards, one finally kills Hitler; I have played the game myself with a certain amount of pleasure.) In Warcraft, having won a particular battle, the player graduates to a more difficult level, and is greeted there by the game's narrator, who speaks the medieval fustian that seems to have spread from the Emperor in the "Star Wars" trilogy to many areas of the kiddie culture. "A great host of Orcs have reconstructed the Dark Portal and now lay siege to the land of Nethergarde," the narrator says. The voice rings out in the house like some lugubrious fake who won't go home after a dinner party.

Max may then meet some friends and go for some lunch at the nearest Burger King, where he will eat a Double Whopper and drink a Coke and sternly ignore (I hope) the free dolls and other promotional appeals for "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." Afterward, the group of boys may drift to a violent special-effects debauch like "Mission: Impossible." Later, they may play some basketball in the park (baseball is not the game of choice for media kids), or just hang out at home and (if we let them) watch TV or a rented movie. As the kids sit watching, we shove plates of raw vegetables and roast chicken in their faces, which they sample, all the while demanding chips, Fritos, and Pop-Tarts. And so on, into the night. We intervene, pulling Max away from his friends, but on those occasions when we're at work and can't intervene, he's spent his whole day in media junk, including the food—a day of pleasure, companionship, and maybe heightened alertness, but little else.

Crashing into the kitchen, my sons talk in the private languages they've worked up from exposure to the shows, movies, computer games, rap music, and basketball players that matter to them. Children have always spoken in tongues, living inside their jokes and insults—my friends and I did it forty years ago—but in recent years the talk has grown quicker, more jangled and allusive, shifting at near-electronic speeds from, say, imitations of Apu, the Kwik-E-Mart manager in "The Simpsons," to Darth Vader, then to Snoop Doggy Dogg and on to jaw-jutting taunts from "Ace Ventura" and other Jim Carrey movies. The chil-

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dren channel-surf their own minds. They can talk logically and soberly, but they seem at their happiest bopping through the apartment, like Robin Williams on a roll, the older one with his high, serious forehead and dark-brown hair parted in the middle, like a German scientist from 1912, and the younger one singing and crowing and then tumbling over his own lines.

"Whooha! Whooha! It is *you*, young Skywalker, who are mistaken. Alrightee then! Power and the money, money and the power. Minute after minute, hour after hour. Thank you, come again!"

SOMEONE is bound to say, "It was ever thus," meaning that, as far as their elders are concerned, every generation of children is immersed in something that's no good for them. New York kids in the eighteen-sixties grew up in a rough city with gangs, street violence, and prostitutes, and most of them were no doubt familiar with such raucous and unenlightening entertainments as cockfighting and bare-knuckle boxing. It was ever thus. After all, many of us watched a good bit of TV as children, yet we wound up O.K., didn't we? What has changed? In a famous essay from 1954, "Paul, the Horror Comics, and Dr. Wertham," the cultural critic Robert Warshow deplored the violence and nihilistic goofiness of such pulp as "The Vault of Horror" and "Crime Suspen-Stories," but concluded that parents were worrying too much about horror comics. Children, like his son Paul, were resilient; most of them would outgrow comic books and would pass on to more complex narratives.

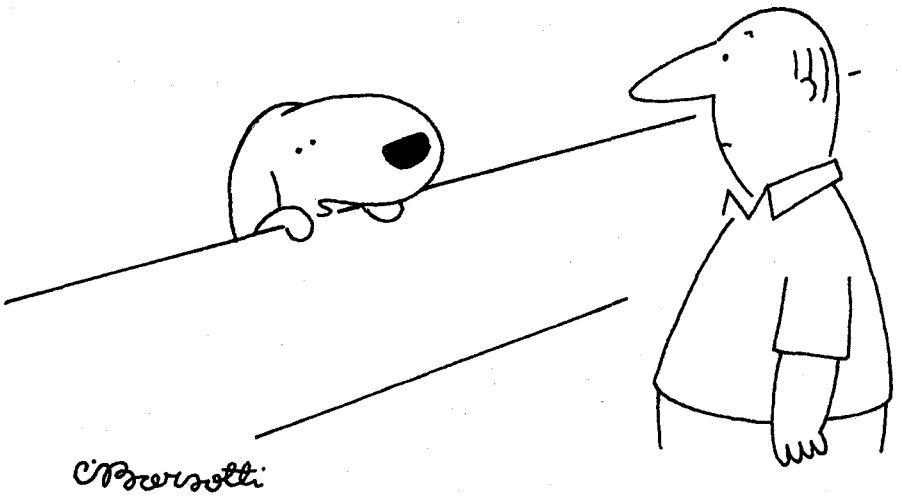
In the nineties, a great deal more than horror comics is jabbing at children, but we can agree with Warshow that the kids stay interested in nothing for very long. The computer games and TV shows, for instance, mark and cut the path of their own extinction, quickly creating a restlessness that causes the child to turn against the games and the shows themselves. Children go from one craving to another, discarding—I don't know—"Looney Tunes" for "Superman," and "Superman" for "MacGyver," and "MacGyver" for "The Wonder Years," and "The Wonder Years" for Wolfenstein, and Wolfenstein for Sim City, and Sim City for Myst, and Myst for Doom, and Doom for Doom II. Nothing lasts. The restlessness produced by each station on this Via Dolorosa annihilates any chance for real devotion, and the child passes on. Finally the child passes *out:* he emerges at the other end of the media tunnel—though perhaps still ungratified.

My boys, after all, do not seem to be in dire trouble. They can be determinedly earnest on moral questions; they stand up for their friends and for powerless people. They are not, I think, likely to behave violently or commit crimes (the rewards for staying straight are too obvious), and if they screw up they will, like most white upper-middle-class children, be given a second chance, and a third, and they will probably do all right—they will probably come through.

But with what internal injuries along the way? It is a miserable question. Social scientists, looking for quantifiable results, have devised clinical experiments that measure the different effects of violence on children. These effects, which are apparently greater on boys, can be placed in three categories: direct imitation, which is rare, and the more frequent effects of desensitization (acceptance of violence as the way of the world) and a generalized fearfulness, a learned distrust and wariness. But as I write these words, I realize that the test results, however disturbing, are not the point. No social scientist need prove a direct effect on children's behavior for some of us to hate the bullying, conformist shabbiness of the worst pop and the way it consumes our children. If children are living in pop culture, and a good part of it is ugly and stupid, that is effect enough; the sheer cruddiness is an affront.

Individually, the games or shows may have little effect—or, at least, no effect that can't be overcome. But collectively, I'm not so sure. Even if the child's character is not formed by a single TV show, movie, video game, or computer game, the endless electronic assault obviously leaves its marks all over him. The children grow up, but they become ironists—ironists of waste. They know that everything in the media is disposable. Everything on television is just for the moment—it's just television—and the kids pick up this devaluing tone, the sense that nothing matters. Sold a bill of goods from the time they are infants, many of today's children, I suspect, will never develop the equipment to fight off the system of flattery and propitiation which soothes their insecurities and pumps their egos. By the time they are five or six, they've been pulled into the marketplace. They're on their way to becoming not citizens but consumers.

It was not ever thus. Our reality has changed. The media have become three-dimensional, inescapable, omnivorous, and self-referring—a closed system that seems, for many of the kids, to answer all their questions. The older children teach the younger ones the games and movie references, so they have something to talk about when they're alone. I've just run into a three-year-old girl who knew the names of the characters in "Hunchback" before the movie opened. Disney has already claimed her. Pop has also absorbed the



"This is a stickup."

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oppositional energies that used to be associated with the avant-garde and with minority cultures, making once brave gestures empty gestures, commodifying discontent, inbreeding it with the edgy, in-your-face tone that teen-agers adopt as the sound of independence. That jeering tone has spread like a rash through the whole culture. It's awesome. It sucks.

When my older boy lets fly a stream of epithets in the rancorous tones of an inner-city black teen-ager, I know that the joke is on me—the white liberal. But the joke is not on me alone, of course: rap is very popular in the suburbs. One of the most remarkable social transactions of our time is the widespread assumption by white middle-class boys of the attitudes of a genuinely dispossessed class of young black men. Commodification of rage plays strange tricks. When the triumphal or despairing rant leaves its source, where it serves as a passionate expression of survival and protest, and goes into the heads of middle-class white children, it serves very different needs, fuelling the emotional demands of pre-teens and teens who may be afraid of women and of the adult world in general. The kids know that the profane rap lyrics are a violation; they speak the words with an almost ecstatic sense of release. Their parents, however, experience those words as an angry assault, and they can either roll with the punches, in which case they feel they've become teen-agers themselves, or sternly disapprove, like the squares in a fifties teen-rebel movie. "Make a stand," I tell myself as I disapprove and forbid, but dignity is not much to fall back on.

Some sort of commercialized aggression is always putting parents on the defensive—Jim Carrey with ketchup coming out of his ears in movie after movie, or Sylvester Stallone machine-gunning the population of Cleveland, or video arcades with so many shooting games that the noise level exceeds that of the Battle of the Somme. "Beavis and Butt-head" is a clever show—it mocks the cruddy teen culture even as it sells it to teens. The show brilliantly sends itself up. Still, it's hard to take. You have to listen to that warthog snort-giggle-snort, so reminiscent of advanced lunacy, as well as the frequent butthole-buttwipe exchanges. Hip parents may appreciate the wryness of B. & B.'s self-extinction, but it's dismaying that everything on teen TV—even irony—is a commodity.

The kids in the dating-game programs treat each other as commodities, the girls swinging their shoulders and smiling as they show themselves off, the audience whooping as the boys pull off their shirts and reveal their pecs and tattoos. Hardly the end of Western civilization, I admit, but the way the shows force teens to stereotype one another is awful. Children don't understand vulgarity as a concept, and the makers of commercial culture would be happy if they never understood it. Parents have to teach them what vulgarity is somehow. When I have the energy, I argue, I satirize, I get the boys to agree that the shows are stupid. Yet I don't turn off the set, because doing that would only cause them to turn it back on when I'm not there. I want *them* to turn it off.

Whether the sets are off or on, the cruddy tone is in the air and on the streets. The kids pick it up and repeat it, and every week there are moments when I feel a spasm of fury that surges back and forth between resentment and self-contempt. In those moments, I don't like the way my boys talk—I don't like the way they think. The crude, bottom-line attitudes they've picked up, the nutty obsessive profanity, the echo chamber of voices and attitudes, set my teeth on edge. The stuff fits, and they wear it. What American parent hasn't felt that spasm? Your kid is rude and surly and sees everything in terms of winning or losing or popularity and becomes insanely interested in clothes and seems far, far from courage and selfhood.

Aided by armies of psychologists and market researchers, the culture industries reach my children at every stage of their desires and their inevitable discontent. What's lost is the old dream that parents and teachers will nurture the organic development of the child's own interests, the child's own nature. That dream is largely dead. In this country, people possessed solely by the desire to sell have become far more powerful than parents tortuously working out the contradictions of authority, freedom, education, and soul-making.

"If you can't say anything nice about Kathie Lee Gifford, just shut up."

In "The Republic" Plato declares that the young should hear nothing—not even a few discordant lines from Homer—that would form their characters improperly. Plato can be mischie-

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LIVING WITH SNAKES

Since their natural habitat with its wide secret
Night-long itinerary
Is impossible for you to reproduce,
Your snakes will be
Unhappy living with you. Though you give them
Their stones and water,
Sand, ultraviolet light, and hiding places,
Serve embryo mice
And daily (gently, gingerly) touch and soothe
Their one-way scales,
They will scarcely look at you without recoiling.
Though you make a nest
In the branches of your stiffened hands and fingers,
They will climb beyond it,
Searching for more than you at the end of you.
What is it they want?
Not simply to shed their skins or to escape
From their pet master
But to become what doesn't exist, to remain
At length inside their bodies
Yet to reach a place where they have none at all.
Though you may offer
The run of the house to them, from basement to attic,
The hollows of your walls,
The luxurious pillows of your insulation,
They will reappear
Dissatisfied some pale morning, having been trailed
Through those headlong retreats
By their followers, by processions of rib cages,
By their narrowest selves.

—DAVID WAGONER

vous, but he appears to be saying that young people will adopt only the behavior that they have heard about. Today, fundamentalists have taken up this concept of education like a cudgel. Salman Rushdie's impressionistic, dream-filled novel "The Satanic Verses," in which the narrator makes fun of Muhammad, is an attack on all Islam. Kill the novelist! An American commercial movie—say, "Sleeping with the Enemy"—that has a bad marriage in it is seen not as the dramatization of a single, fictional marriage but as an attack on the institution of marriage itself. Save the institution of marriage! Well-educated American conservatives who vilify popular culture for political ends appear to want entertainment that is didactic, improving, hygienic.

In a true liberal-arts education, however, children are exposed to many stories, from many sources. They hear about all sorts of behavior—wickedness and goodness and the many fascinating varieties in between—and are taught what a narrative is and what its moral relation to life might be. Narratives give many pleasures, one of which, surely, is the working out of the story's moral significance, either simple and redundant or complex, layered, and exploratory. Parents and teachers still hope that a complicated narrative will serve as a prelude, preparing children for the complexities of life. They will learn good by studying evil as well as good.

Thinking back to my own lazy days at thirteen, I remember noodling around the house and eating my way through boxes of chocolate-chip cookies and watching old movies on TV—thirties comedies and musicals, forties thrillers and war movies, the narrative achievements of a studio system that, whatever else it did wrong, invariably managed to tell stories that pulled the viewer in. I was more passive, and certainly more isolated, than Max, but I was luckier in my movies: the movies were still a narrative medium.

The computer games, I suppose, offer a kind of narrative, but one that yields without resistance to the child's desire for instant gratification. Affording a momentary—and spurious—feeling of power, the summer's new big-budget action movies like "Mission: Impossible" and "The Rock" (and last year's "Batman Forever") offer larger versions of the same thing—increasingly jangled and incoherent narratives that also yield instantly to pleasure. I believe in pleasure, but I hate the way my boys are jacked up by the new movies without ever being drawn into the more enveloping and transforming enchantments of a beautifully worked-out story. They get used to feeling nothing but excitement. ("I don't like *drama*," I once heard one of Max's friends say with considerable exasperation.) An American adventure movie is now simply a violent movie—and, increasingly, an impersonally violent movie whose thrills refer almost entirely to earlier movie images. The Hollywood studios need to top last year's explosions, so they keep the children bucking on a roller-coaster ride to nowhere.

I wouldn't mind the boys' seeing a certain amount of violence in movies or on TV if the violence were dramatized as serious or tragic, or even playful—anything more than an electric prod to their already overstimulated nerves. Children need secrets and hidden places, they need to tempt the forbidden. And they can really learn from tasting temptation. The thrill of danger is good for them: many of the classic stories and movies for children are about danger. But in the big new action movies, no one humanly vulnerable—no one children could identify with—is placed in jeopardy, so there's actually little sense of danger.

Because they haven't been touched or shaken, children think that having seen one violent film justifies seeing another. A parent who vetoes a movie is likely to be told, "I've seen much more violent things than this," by which he means "and yet I've survived." The kid wants to

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test himself against the movie, as if it were a wild ride at an amusement park, and the parent who doesn't utter an immediate and final "no" either argues endlessly, or allows himself to be dragged along with a heavy heart.

Film critics who are parents have a particularly rough time of it. A friend of mine who is also a film critic was confronted by her older son holding the videotape of a horror movie.

"Can I look at this?"

"No, you cannot."

"Why not?"

"Because it's scary, I didn't like it, and I don't want you to see it."

At that point, the child turned over the box and read aloud a rave quote from his mother's review.

My own personal calvary: Without my permission, Max saw "Pulp Fiction" on tape at a friend's house a few months ago, and enjoyed it as a bizarre collection of wicked thrills. I told him I wished he hadn't seen it, but I suppose that in one way I should have been relieved. He wasn't yet far enough along in his education in media irony to see how funny the movie was. "Pulp Fiction" is play, a mocking commentary on old genres, a celebration of pulp flagrancy and violation as pleasure—the sport of a declining movie culture in which sincerity is the only unforgivable sin. Habitual moviegoers savor the fizz in the drink, including the S & M scene, which is deliberately absurd. But I didn't explain this to Max. I saw no reason to expand a twelve-year-old's interest in "Pulp Fiction."

But then, having seen "Pulp Fiction," he wanted to leverage himself into seeing Quentin Tarantino's earlier and much nastier (and more pointless) "Reservoir Dogs." No, I said. But why not? he asked. After all, his friends had seen it. I told him I couldn't stop him from seeing it at someone else's house, but I would prefer that he not. In such exchanges, Max is saying to me (in effect), "If I'm not old enough to see the movie, how come I'm old enough to understand the reasons I'm not supposed to see it?" That is the ultimate question posed to the parents of a media child.

Sometimes we win, but often we give in, because there are moments when my wife and I want to talk to each other or to a friend on the telephone, or read, or

SHOWCASE · BY CHRIS CALLIS

MERCE'S OCEAN

JUST when you thought it was safe to go in the ocean, Merce Cunningham is bringing it to the Lincoln Center Festival. "Ocean," a ninety-minute dance spectacle, will have its New York première in Damrosch Park, from July 30th to August 4th (six performances in all). Seen previously in Brussels, Amsterdam, Venice, and Berkeley, California, this may be the legendary avant-gardist's most ambitious evocation of movement and sound as the keys to life, art, and everything else.

The vast work was conceived originally by John Cage, Cunningham's lifelong collaborator and companion. On being asked to compose a piece for a James Joyce–John Cage Festival in Zurich in 1991, Cage recalled something his friend Joseph Campbell had told him—that if Joyce had lived longer his next work (after "Finnegans Wake") would have been about water and the ocean. Cage died in 1992, when the project was still in its early stages. His ideas were advanced enough, though, to be carried out by Cunningham; Cage's assistant, Andrew Culver; and the composer David Tudor. All of them worked mainly through computerized images and sound forms. Cage saw the event in terms of three concentric circles: Cunningham's fifteen dancers performing in the center, surrounded on all sides by the audience, which is, in turn, surrounded by the musicians—a hundred and twelve musicians, playing a total of 32,067 musical "events," which coexist aurally with a taped collage of ocean sounds (from whale song to foghorn) by the endlessly resourceful Tudor.

Although Cunningham won't be dancing in "Ocean" himself (he is seventy-seven this year, and is plagued by arthritis), his creative energy is still at full flood. "I like approaching something not knowing what it's going to be," he said while he was working on "Ocean." "It's been an extraordinary adventure."

—CALVIN TOMKINS

Kimberly Bartosik, Matthew Mohr, Michael Cole, Merce Cunningham, Banu Ogan, Thomas Caley, and Lisa Boudreau, photographed in New York City, June 15, 1996.

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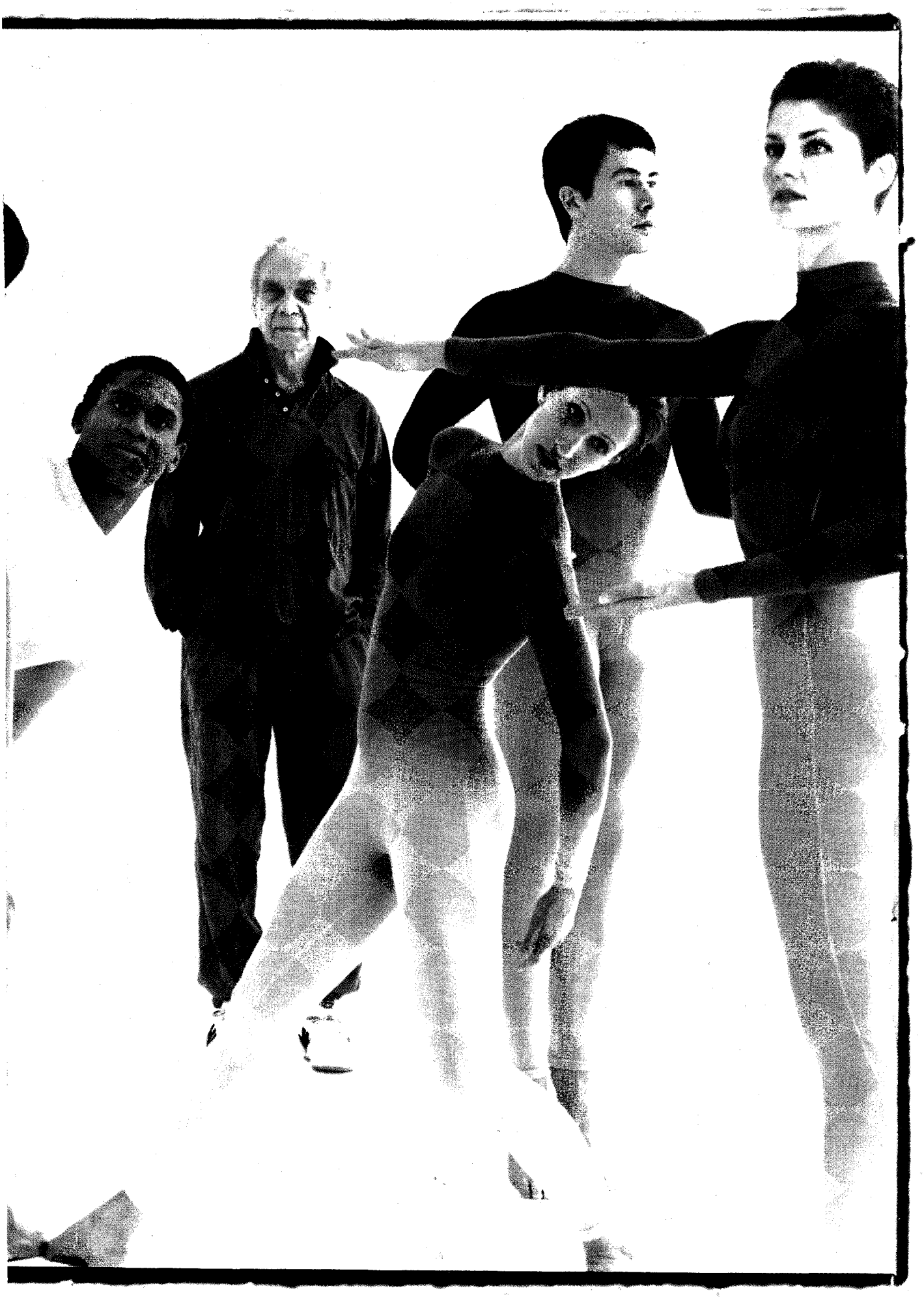

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work. A hundred dollars for a moment of peace! It's the eternal parental cry. And in those moments and hours I let the kids watch what's on TV or play some inane point-and-shoot computer game. I am grateful that the boys have something that bottles them up for a time. The media have suffused the children with pleasure and their parents with guilt.

CONSERVATIVE critics attack the media easily and comfortably. But do they acknowledge any culpability for allowing pop culture and consumerism to become such an overwhelming force in our country's habits of child-rearing? Conservatives would like to believe that capitalism and its extraordinary executive tool, the marketplace, are not only productive and efficient but *good*. Thus they may criticize the "excesses" of a company like Time Warner; they may even criticize "greed," as if greed were some bizarre aberration normally unknown to capitalism. But they can rarely bring themselves to admit that capitalism in its routine, healthy, rejuvenating rampage through our towns, cities, and farmlands forces parents to work at multiple jobs, substitutes malls for small-city commercial streets and neighborhoods, and dumps formerly employed groups (like blacks in the inner cities) onto the street or into dead-end jobs. Or that these developments loosen parental control, and help create the very nihilism and anomie—the rootlessness of nowhere men—that find release in junk movies, rap, pornography, and the rest.

When it comes to pop culture, conservatives are the last innocents. Surely there's something pathetic about Bob Dole's calling for restraint from Time Warner, when it's precisely the unrestrained nature of capitalism that conservatives have always celebrated. Conservatives would make a lot more sense on the subject of popular culture if they admitted that the unregulated marketplace, in its abundant energy, is amoral, that it inspires envy and greediness, that it shreds "values" and offers little space or encouragement for what William Bennett calls "virtues." Parents deserve better than such ideologically motivated hypocrisies.

Nearly every parent, consciously or not, cherishes a kind of idealized timetable that proposes a mood—a state of readiness—in which a child can best be introduced to a new experience. Children's first responses—to nature, to death, to sex, to violence, to the arts, to the news that this world is often a dark and dirty place—obsess parents almost as much as providing proper food and education. In hoping to maintain a reasonable schedule, parents do not necessarily want to protect children's innocence. The schedule, after all, is a way of regulating the *loss* of innocence—opening up the world to children in a way that makes sense.

Parents can still control some of the schedule, but a large part of it has been wrenched out of their hands by pop culture. Is this a calamity? Not really. Middle-class parents are often squeamish and overprotective. Some children may be better off if they escape their parents' grip, healthier if they grow up wild and free and sort things out on their own. Still, the schedule is a lovely idea—one of the enduring talismans of middle-class family life. And parents, however discouraged they may have become, will always try to impose it. They consider imposing it their right. For parents, the early responses are central to the poetry and moral charm of childhood. And to have those intimate moments and pleasures preëmpted by someone's marketing scheme is like receiving a blow to the chest.

If conservatives are going to oppose any sort of government regulation of the marketplace, they can't be surprised that the market overwhelms parents, and that parents then complain that they have lost control. When toys, movies, books, and television shows are all devoted to the same product or performer and are marketed by different branches of the same company, can we rationally speak of free choice in the marketplace? The pro-

"I don't need to be with someone all the time. Being pursued is enough."

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ducers and the distributors may be free, but are the children?

LIBERALS, too, have an accounting to make. There is a strain of opinion regarding the arts which has reigned during the last few decades in most of the bourgeois democracies—in the United States, Australia, Great Britain, France, Germany, and the rest of Western Europe. Let us call it cultural libertarianism (its god is John Stuart Mill). Cultural libertarianism insists on the paramount importance of free expression. Therefore, cultural libertarianism, when it has to, defends, as a corollary, the right of artists to use violence and sex in their work. That exploiters will use violence and sex, too, is exasperating, but such is the price of freedom. There is no way *in law* of curtailing exploiters without also curtailing artists. The market is tawdry, corrupt, and corrupting; it is also exhilarating. In a free society, art and schlock come joined together like ship and barnacle. The way to separate the two is with education and criticism.

"My client is willing to do community service."

Any other approach, cultural libertarians will argue, leads to censorship or (just as bad) self-censorship. In any case, politicized criticism of the media, whether from the left or the right, is often a form of self-righteous hysteria that inflames people against imaginary or relatively harmless dangers while diverting them from genuine social problems. In the United States, we should be less obsessed with popular culture than with the unequal distribution of goods and opportunities in an increasingly stratified society. Anyone can bring pressure on Time Warner, but how do you change an inner-city neighborhood?

So goes the orthodoxy of enlightenment practiced for decades by many people (including me). Many cultural libertarians would agree, of course, that a different set of rules should be brought into play when we are talking about children. The children should be protected; they don't have the right to see and hear everything. But *can* they be protected anymore? Has our social reality changed so much that the automatic celebration of freedom in itself puts children at risk? Cultural libertarians are now faced with a number of unnerving challenges to their self-esteem.

For one thing, the tone of our common culture has coarsened in the last couple of decades. Everyone has said so, and everyone is right. The boasting polygamists on trash TV, the rap lyrics, the rancorous and openly racist talk-radio shows—these are just the most obvious examples. We left-wing types popularized rudeness and slangy candor as a style of public discourse thirty years ago—our language, we thought, would discredit the official hypocrisies—and now everyone is going in for it. With depressing effect: even those who love profanity may be dismayed to hear a former mayor of New York calling someone a "schmuck" on the radio. It is not the words that matter so much as the ravaging lack of dignity. The rout of gentility, which cultural libertarians sparked, has now been followed by the rout of self-respect. On ragged and exhausted nights, the wised-up tone of everything wears one down. As I go to sleep in our second-floor bedroom, I can hear couples dully cursing one another on the street, the words landing like blows. (That women now give as much as they get makes the sound no less melancholy.) When the clock radio clicks on in the morning, giggles and hoots accompany anyone trying to talk about a subject more serious than the weather. In the nineties, sarcasm is no longer a resistance to the marketplace; it *is* the marketplace. The constant atmosphere of selling creates a common ironic consciousness, the derisiveness of people in the know. And what do they know? That everyone is out for himself, that greed is what drives life forward. Derision has become the spirit of the jammed, crazy, relentless talk, the needling spritz of radio, of late-night TV, of kids teasing and threatening on the street. In these worlds, in our common

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world, no other kind of talk takes hold. If you aren't derisive, you're out of it. You're not in the market.

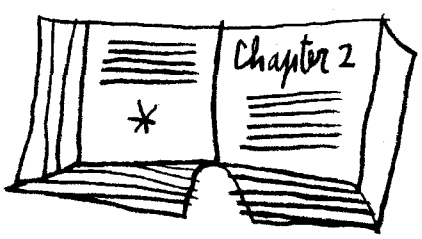
Adults learn to screen a lot of this out, but children don't necessarily do so. They enjoy it. They imitate it—and who can blame them? The media and the streets are far more exciting than school, where virtue so often comes packaged as learning.

Then there's the problem of pop growth: the huge increases in the formidability and quantity of mass culture—the new Fox network, the local and national cable operators, the Sony PlayStation and Sega and Nintendo systems, the innumerable computer games, and the rest. The problem is not simply that the stuff comes flooding in on children from all sides. The problem is that easy entertainment and self-serving communication of one sort or another (political speech, commercial messages, infotainment, advertorials, ego rants, self-promoting "confessions") increasingly push everything else to the margins. If you click through the channels, including the zillion cable channels, at different times of day, you will discover that serious communication of any sort is a tiny portion of what's available. One of the comedies of intellectual life in recent years has been the spectacle of the cultural left in the universities complaining that the words of women or minorities have been suppressed, when the exponential growth of mass communication has swamped just about anything of real consequence.

Cultural libertarians have been too complacently self-regarding in their defense of free expression. It's a noble position, a necessary position, never to be relinquished, but at this point it isn't enough. How valuable is the latest constitutional victory for freedom of speech if the general level of speech continues to be degraded? Moreover, some of the cultural libertarians, including me, have a minor crime to answer for—the too-easy use of such loaded words as "subversive" and "transgressive" to praise movies and rock albums that offer a little more sex and violence than other good movies and albums. A few years ago, liberal-minded cultural critics, terrified of standing with the squares, got bullied out of any sort of principled public resistance to pop. They took themselves out of the game, and left the field open for William Bennett's iron moralism.

THOMAS becomes annoyed when I question him about the Saturday morning kiddies' shows, in which, it seems, the world is always being saved by uniformed teens from some basso-voiced monster and his wicked female companion. Whatever I may think about the homogenized nature of these shows, however, Thomas sees important differences among them. What he loved six months ago, for instance, he now regards as beyond the pale. The market has moved him along and made him contemptuous of what he has discarded. He's a very easygoing child, but, as far as he's concerned, his entertainment choices are not our business. Shyly, like suitors with hat in hand, we question his tastes and try to introduce him to the older arts, to the things we love. It may be ridiculous, but parents suffer a narcissistic wound when their children don't care about their favorite pictures, their books and music. Five years ago, we heard, on the car radio, Chuck Berry singing "Johnny B. Goode," and Max, who was then in the depth of his Billy Joel phase, said he liked it. We were absurdly happy. He likes Chuck Berry! When Tommy popped out of bed at eleven o'clock recently and, half asleep, asked me if we could listen immediately to all nine of the Beethoven symphonies, I began playing the "Eroica," and he fell back to sleep on the couch, a warrior at rest, as the music swirled over him.

Choice! It has to mean more for parents than an endless opening to the market. An active and engaged liberalism, while rejecting censorship, would encourage the breaking up of such vertically integrated culture monoliths as Disney, Sony, and Time Warner. It would ask for more regulation. (The V-chip is only the beginning.) It would, for instance, support the attempt of Reed Hundt, the reform-minded F.C.C. chairman, to require broadcasters to put on three hours of educational television a week. (Which might mean three fewer hours of trash.) And it would go far beyond the mere celebration of choice. It would insist on discrimination—not in the racial sense but in the cultural arena, where liberals, so eager to appreciate everyone's point of view, are often milky and weak. If parents are not to feel defeated by the media and pop culture, they must get over their reluctance to make choices that are based on clear assertions of moral values. They cannot leave to the "virtuecrats" the defense of religion, high culture, the meritocracy, the Western literary classics, or anything else that implies a hierarchy of taste. They have to join the discourse and make it aesthetically and morally alive.



ON vacation, away from Media City, without a television or a movie theatre in sight, I read to Max the novel that begins, "My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip." The same novel was read to me at the same age—not by my father but by an elderly teacher who entertained her students after lunch by reciting both "Oliver Twist" and "Great Expectations" in a Midwesterner's gentle version of a thick Cockney accent. On vacation, Max became completely absorbed in the book, his eyes turning dreamy and inward-looking, and we read a great deal, for ninety minutes at a time. I was happy, too, because I was not on the carpet anymore, down there in the plastic rubble.

But then we returned to the metropolis. TV sets and computers, as well as school and friends, pressed in on all sides, and the reading slowly petered out. We read less every night, and after a while Dickens, who only weeks earlier had enchanted so tenderly, now seemed slow, laborious, convoluted, even boring. We've picked the book up a few times since, and my son is slowly climbing back into it—that he enjoys it, I have no doubt—but I don't know if we'll ever finish it. I would like to, and so would he, but Dickens's long, rolling sentences require peace and time, and the air is just too charged around here. ♦

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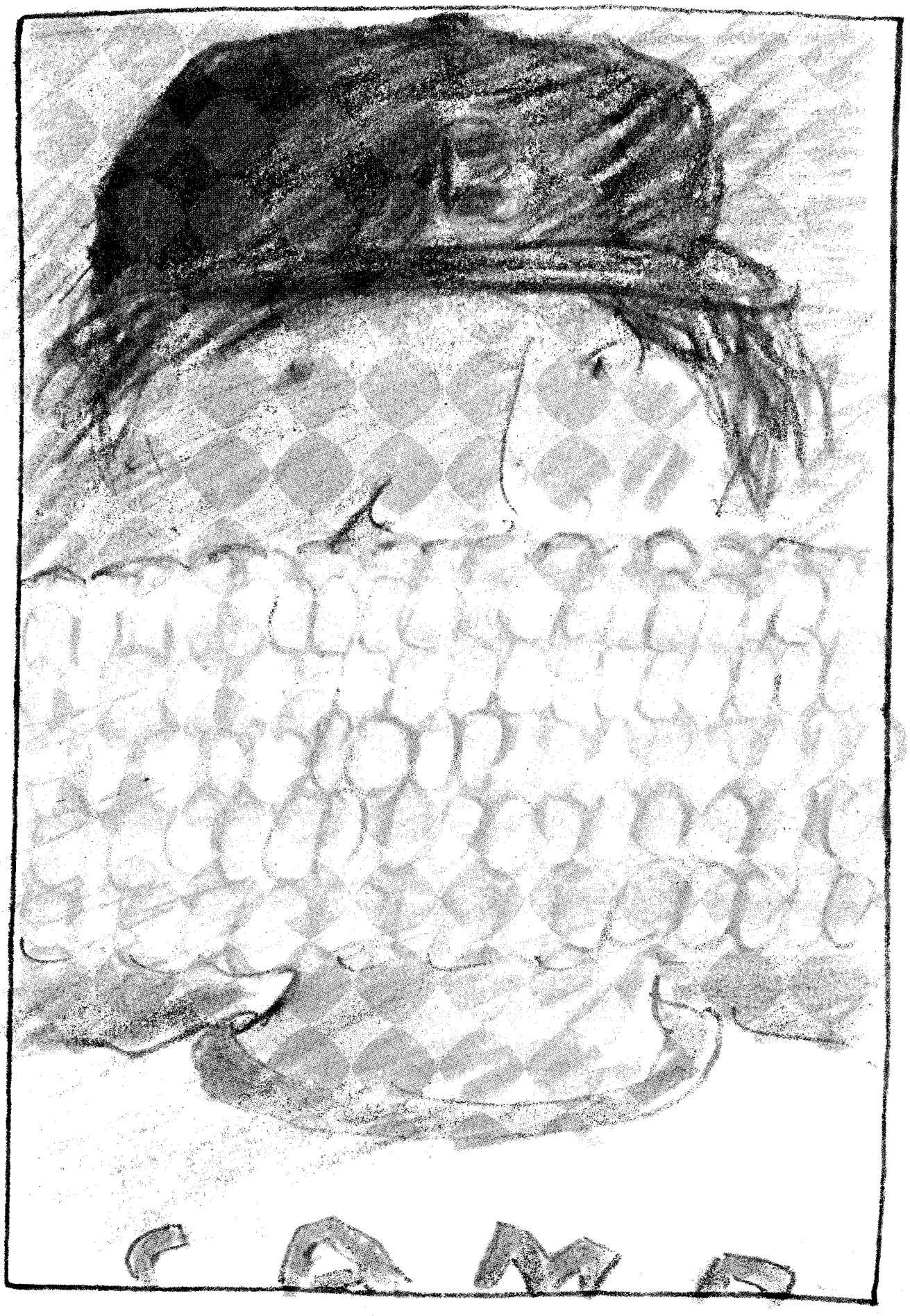
SKETCHBOOK · BY MICHAEL CRAWFORD

ALL EARS



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THE ART WORLD

HOMER'S ODYSSEY

What drove Winslow Homer to the sea?

BY SIMON SCHAMA

TWO bodies, fastened together, swing through space between a dirty sky and a boiling sea. A young woman, her figure tightly modelled by the saturated dress, face upturned in a half-drowned swoon, lies heavily between her rescuer's supporting thighs. His hands lock beneath her right breast, and his left boot projects through the picture space while his right foot drops like a rudder into the slapping gray-green water. Incongruously delicate droplets stream from the woman's hands into the marine trough that divides a monstrous oncoming wave from the churning breakers. Across the length of the painting is strung the cable from which the bodies are suspended, between a wreck and a bluff—death and life. A little left of center, a block and tackle, sharply defined against an exploding column of spray, holds the composition stable and secures the destiny of its protagonists.

End of story? Not in a Winslow Homer masterpiece. For although in a preliminary drawing he sketched in the rugged features of the coast guard, the finished version of "The Life Line" shrouds them behind a windblown blood-red muffler. That calculated invisibility, set in the dead center of the painting, suppresses any possibility of melodrama, while the visibility of a half inch of knee between sodden stocking and skirt promotes the union of sensuality and pathos. A predictable drama turns enigmatic, hauntingly unresolved.

No matter how many times one has seen "The Life Line," or the many other canonical works in the great Winslow Homer exhibition now at the Metropolitan Museum, it's impossible not to be struck all over again by their epic power. The forcefulness of Homer's work makes itself felt not so much through its ostensible subject matter, which can be either humdrum or heroic, as through the quirky originality of his composition. The greatest of the pictures break free of narrative description and pull the viewer into a universe of raw animal action, of creatures caught in unsparing nature. Exhibited in 1884, "The Life Line" was acclaimed a tour de force, and was sold for the substantial sum of twenty-five hundred dollars. But many of Homer's other marine paintings, executed with the same dark intensity—"The Fog Warning," for example—failed to find buyers. Samuel Isham, who, shortly before Homer's death, in 1910, published the first comprehensive history of American art, understood that the rejection of decorative anecdote was what often made Homer's paintings difficult to sell. Unlike Innes's or Whistler's paintings, he explained, "they will always be windows opened in a wall rather than squares of brocade stretched upon it; they have none of the amenities of the drawing room, and you might almost as well let the sea itself into your house as one of Homer's transcripts of it."

On Cape Cod, Thoreau had called the seacoast a "wild rank place . . . [with] no flattery in it." Homer, in his later years, consciously cultivated a briny persona that matched this roughness. When he was not communing with the roaring sea from his studio, on Prout's Neck, Maine, he was off in the Adirondacks with his brother Charles, angling for trout. During his lifetime and after, his reputation was that of an inspired brute—an artist whose testiness was legendary and who preferred the company of his dogs and the wheeling gulls to the din of city life. The portrait of the artist as a storm-wracked hero (it's hard to believe he wasn't pleased by the many puns on his name) answered the post-Civil War need for an assertively and distinctively American painting. But the truth about Homer is more complicated. This was a salt-caked genius who seldom sailed and never swam; who on being faced with the necessity of killing a live duck for a stew preferred to make it a family pet; and who gloried in a huge wardrobe, designed after the manner of an English squire—underwear purchased by the gross, "trousers of the month" delivered from his tailor. Though many of his arresting images of the Maine coast, pounded by northeasters, are set in bleak winter, he spent some of those winter months in Florida or the Caribbean, producing magically deliquescent watercolors. And, while it's usual to consider Homer the polar opposite of Whistler—confrontationally blunt rather than atmospherically ingratiating—one of the current exhibition's most beautiful rooms displays work from the eighteen-seventies, when Homer painted girls posed ornamentally in window bowers and summer gardens and also the curvy blonde in "The Dinner Horn," who is lit so that her hips echo the trunk of a springtime tree.

Even in this "aesthetic" phase, though, Homer was a stubborn oddity. "Blackboard" (1877), which in lesser hands would be a sentimental genre piece, is a psychologically charged study of schoolgirl moodiness. The girl, given physical immediacy by a touch of pink on the outer rim of her ear, turns, like so many of Homer's young women, in pensive profile from the mechanical drawings on the board. With typical slyness, Homer has indicated the smarting confinement of geometry not just by the chalk figures but by austere solid rectangles—flesh pink, slate gray, and black (floor, wall, and

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blackboard)—that partition the picture within its claustrophobically shallow space.

MANY of Winslow Homer's best paintings manage to personify American—or even universal—themes in isolated figures or small groups. When, early in his career as an illustrator-journalist, he was commissioned by *Harper's Weekly* to provide images of the Civil War, he painted "The Sharpshooter on Picket Duty," which eschewed cast-of-thousands battlefield bombast in favor of a single soldier, wedged in the notch of a tree and peering through his telescopic sights at an unseen target. Instead of opening up the space to indicate some distant quarry, Homer brings the beholder disconcertingly close, as if he were perched in a neighboring tree. A dab of strategically placed scarlet on the soldier's cap paradoxically puts him in *our* gun sights, as if the sense of vision itself had been made to go soldiering.

Given Homer's resolutely unromantic view of the war, it's perhaps surprising that his Civil War paintings made his reputation. Even when he deepens the picture space, as in "A Rainy Day in Camp (Camp near Yorktown)," he uses the orthogonal lines of perspective to marshal endless trains of mules, horses, tents, and wagons, stretching away to the vanishing point, and suggesting the melancholy infinity of the conflict. In 1867, two of his best-known paintings—"The Prisoners from the Front" and "The Bright Side," which depicts a group of emphatically undeferential black sutlers resting by their tent—were shown at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. It's often said that Homer brought nothing home with him from this trip in the way of painterly inspiration. His profoundest work of these years, "The Veteran in a New Field," where waves of grain stand in for the numberless war dead, might seem to owe a debt to Millet's monumental peasants but was in fact completed before the French trip. Yet Homer's turn toward social scenery—croquet greens and bathing resorts—does seem to respond to calls, both in France and in America, to replace unpopulated sublimity with "the painting of contemporary life."

The exhibition catalogue for the Met show, which includes excellent essays by Nicolai Cikovsky, Jr., and Franklin Kelly, makes much of Homer's "modernity," seeing in his mallet-swinging or mule-riding ladies exemplars of the Strong American Women that he is said to have admired. At various points in the catalogue, Homer is likewise recruited as environmentally sensitive, racially broad-minded, conscientiously pacifist, child- and deer-friendly, and, for the straw-hat-and-whiskers generation, just a terrific specimen of the New Man.

But Homer, it seems to me, was interested less in modernity than in eternity. "The Two Guides," one of the freshest and most exhilarating of all Homer's works, unites a grizzled patriarch and his younger partner with the Adirondack scenery by burying their boots in the windblown waves of fern and bracken. Wisps of early-morning clouds, painted with confident freedom, hang on the hillsides and hover about the men. A sharp point of sunlight catches the wooden handle of the younger man's axe, which is perpendicular to a sliced-away branch. Yet somehow the whetted steel and the wood are made partners rather than adversaries. The entire painting proclaims a natural bond between the antiquity of America's geography and the youthfulness of its history.

Winslow Homer with his brother Charles. The artist had a reputation as a storm-wracked hero, but the truth is more complicated.

BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART, BRUNSWICK, MAINE, GIFT OF THE HOMER FAMILY

Homer's instinct for seeing classical, and even antique, figures reincarnated as contemporary types was allowed full expression during 1881 and 1882, while he was staying in the fishing village of Cullercoats, on the Northumbrian coast of England. Cullercoats had already been adopted as a painter's and photographer's resort, so that the fisherwomen whom Homer translated into mackerel-whiffing Penelopes, scanning the horizon or standing in the shallows while their skirts billow, sail-like, in the wind, would probably have had some experience in posing as objets d'art. But the transformation of simple into grand matter occurred in Homer's medium as well as in his subjects. The Cullercoats paintings are almost all watercolors, which, through a cumulative process of drawing, washing, rewetting, scraping, lifting, blotting, and wiping, invested a medium that was still thought of as delicately picturesque with rugged power. Whether Homer was calculating the precise effect of a wet-in-wet wash to create a great bloom of smoke from a distant ship in "Fisherman's Family (The Lookout)" or building dense layers of gray-black to create the evil sky beneath which the

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COLLECTION OF ERVING AND JOYCE WOLF

Winslow Homer's "Oranges on a Branch" (1885). He liberated watercolors from their deference to oils.

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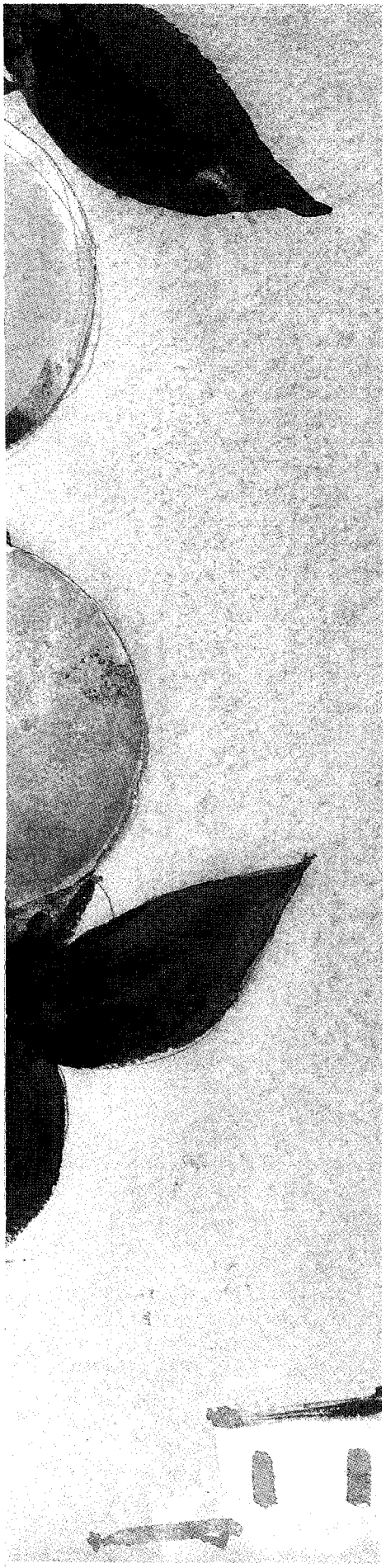

lifeboat in "The Wreck of the Iron Crown" labors, he liberated watercolors from their deference to oils, exploiting their varying degrees of transparency to maximum dramatic effect.

As Homer's watercolors achieved unprecedented clarity, his oils went in the opposite direction, becoming a vehicle for testing the limits of sight. The veiled face of the coast guard in "The Life Line" has been associated with Homer's urges toward simultaneous display and concealment—the boldness of his shyness, as it were—and many of the most profound of the paintings of the eighties make obscurity and visual isolation their subject. The solitary fisherman in "The Fog Warning"—from his frail dory, weighed down with a pallid catch of halibut—looks desperately toward a mother vessel that appears to be sailing away as the shrouding fog rolls grimly toward him. And the closest to self-portraiture that Homer ever approached was the eerie image of his own studio in Prout's Neck mantled in thick Maine fog.

The Boston *Herald*, in 1884, described Prout's Neck as a "strange hermitage" and Homer's existence in Maine as one of "profound and guarded solitude." He had chosen to live there so as to be next door to his brother Charles, whose retreat was known as the Ark, but during the twenty-five years Homer spent there, up until his death, he became inhospitable to any other kind of human company, deterring enthusiasts and would-be biographers and claiming to paint strictly for the money. Behind this curmudgeonly guise, however, a profound alteration in his sensibility was taking place, as it shifted from a descriptive to an imaginative, even mystical, temper. Humanity, once a leading player in his portrayal of nature's epic performances, now played only a bit part. Throughout his career, Homer was strangely evasive about physiognomy, repeatedly summarizing facial appearance, turning heads to the rear or to quarter profile, or hanging lengths of hair over the face. And by the mid-nineties the only face that interested him was the countenance of the ocean. Where the brawny pair of Adirondack guides seem to draw strength from their habitat, the hunter in "The Winter Coast," his features virtually invisible, is artificially miniaturized in relation to the granite slabs and the clouds of sea foam that confront him. Instead of commanding the scenery, Homer's creatures become its prisoners.

When Homer concentrated on his essential subject, his painting abandoned realistic description for an expressive sensationalism unprecedented in American art. The formal organization of the late marine paintings is aggressive in its compressions of depth and space. A square format, as in "On a Lee Shore" and "Cannon Rock," reinforces the sense of entrapment by perpetually returning the beholder's gaze to the center of the painting, like flotsam driven by the tide. While Homer undoubtedly wanted these paintings to represent the creative and destructive moods of the sea, the truth of these representations is less literal than virtual. The rolling, heaving forms establish their own hypnotic rhythm, working on the surface of the canvas yet retaining their identity as forces of nature. Giddily, we sense as much as, or more than, we see.

On the rare occasions when figures are set against the ocean they are almost always women, and at such moments Homer, the lifelong bachelor, seems to suggest a natural sympathy between the tidal flow of human and marine life: the sea as the great matrix of the world. The same passion for sea-mothering turns up throughout nineteenth-century culture—most movingly in Jules Michelet, Victor Hugo, Whitman, and Conrad. But none of them come close to Homer's "Summer Night," where, bathed in milky moonlight, a group of women sit watching the reflections bob and lift while two others dance in synchronization with the lilting ocean. The dress of one of the women seems itself a surfy cascade, on which her partner, with closed eyes and dreamy expression, rests her cheek. For the last time, Homer's bodies touch, and their hands, held out over the ocean, fold gently against each other, like the waves that are rolling—serenely, for once—to the shore. ♦

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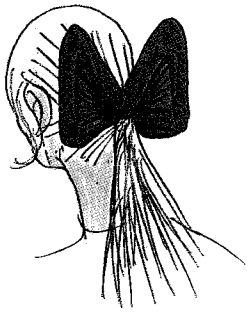
FICTION

TAKE MY HAND

BY AMY BLOOM



MRS. HILL was almost blind—she had something-retinitis. There was a hole in the center of her vision, as if someone had ripped the middle out of every page. If she turned her head way to the right or left, she could just about see my face. When I walked toward her as she sat in the big red vinyl recliner, she would turn her face far to the right; the closer I got, the more she seemed to yearn toward the kitchen. When I was almost upon her, she would smile away from me.

On Saturdays I tidied up Mrs. Hill's house and made her lunch and dinner. She was my good deed, courtesy of the Reverend Samuel C. Shales, pastor at the Belvedere Road A.M.E. Zion Church, Where Everybody Is Somebody and Jesus Is Lord Over All. At eleven o'clock on September 16th, through the window of my ninth-grade math class, I had heard gospel music for the first time. Those sweet, meaty sounds led me to a white wood church on a street corner my school bus didn't pass. I walked past Reverend Shales's office each time I came in to listen, and each time he looked right at me and kept talking on the phone. I stayed close by the church bulletin board, my eyes down, my heart singing like Mahalia Jackson.

Reverend Shales was shorter than I'd thought, and his glasses shimmered in the dusty light.

"Miss? You're visiting our church again?"

I said yes. He asked my name, my parents' names, my address, and my school, and however embarrassed I was to be caught lurking in this church hall he was not sorry to have me there. His eyes shone like black pearls. I seemed like a girl who could offer a little companionship, he said. I could run to the corner store and bring back the right change, couldn't I? I wasn't above a little light cleaning, was I? He invited me to come and listen to the choir whenever I liked, and also to take this opportunity, this special opportunity, to serve, to offer Christian charity to the very sweet, very lovely elderly lady just down the road. He led me out the church door and pointed far down Belvedere Road to a small no-color house with a patchy lawn and a listing porch.

"I'll phone Miz Hill to say you're on your way. You are on your way now, Elizabeth." And he put his big hand on the small of my back and pushed. He said Go, and I went.

CRINKLY, lifeless gray curls floated up and across Mrs. Hill's gray-brown scalp, winging out over her ears. What must once have been round, brown eyes had become opaque beige slits, like two additional spots of smooth skin in her dark puckered face. She had seven housedresses, and her doctor daughter came home twice a year from the great, safe distance of California and replaced them all. Mrs. Hill did not rotate them as Dr. Hill intended; she wore the pink one all week, and when it was stiff with sweat and moisturizer and medicated cream for her eczema she threw it in the hamper for me to wash. On Saturdays she wore the purple housedress, and I didn't blame her a bit. It was the least practical of them; instead of a cotton-poly gingham it was soft velour, and the pull on the end of the zipper was a purple-and-yellow sunflower, as though van Gogh had got loose in the Sears catalogue. In her purple sunflower robe, Mrs. Hill told my fortune.

"Long life here," she said, one thick, twisted finger digging into the middle of my palm. "Love affairs here. Did you bring Mrs. Hill some pork rinds?"

Dr. Hill had posted a note saying that Mrs. Hill had all sorts of things wrong with her heart and salt and fat were out of the question. Mrs. Hill and I had a deal: one palm reading for a bag of Salty Jim's pork rinds.

"Open up that bag and set it right here. Let's have that hand."

I popped open two cans of grape soda.

Mrs. Hill bent over my palm, and I could smell the greasy fruit scent of her hair pomade and the piercing eucalyptus of Vicks VapoRub, which she used prophylactically.

"The love affairs startin' early." She jabbed my palm and then held my hand up to me, showing me the point at which the love line joined the life line.

"Really?" I said. I didn't think I was having a love affair. Everyone in school loved Mr. Stone, and I knew he liked me, but it wasn't sexy, and you couldn't have an affair without sex. When I was in fifth grade I had had a little sex with Seth Stern, but it wasn't what I thought a love affair should be. We were playing James Bond and he pulled down my underpants and put his hand between my legs. He stuck one long finger inside me and rocked me roughly on his hand until we heard our parents gathering coats in the front hall. He pushed me back onto the bed and yanked up my panties while running his thumb along the inside of my thigh. My parents called for me, and we went downstairs, all my attention on my bruised, wet center and on Seth, who insisted on shaking my father's hand as we said goodbye. The tension and excitement and shame I felt were terrible and vivid. This was *life*. Out of remorse, or indifference, he wouldn't answer my phone calls, and my parents had just about dropped the Sterns anyway, so I kept my virginity quite a while longer and I dreamed of his hands.

Mrs. Hill leaned back in her recliner and twisted her face away to watch me. "In my closet there's a hatbox, an old red hatbox. Bring it to me, sugar."

Mrs. Hill used endearments only when she was asking me a favor or was criticizing me.

The closet would have been my mother's worst nightmare: blouses lying on the floor in their wrinkled, dusty puddles, single shoes turned heel up sticking into piles of sweaters and pants. On the top shelf were three hatboxes—one faded red, one with green and white stripes,

FILIP PAGOWSKI

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and a yellowed one with grimy ivory tassels hanging from the sides. Mrs. Hill was much shorter than I was and could barely hobble from room to room; the hatboxes and the shelf they sat on were covered with dust.

Mrs. Hill rested her red hatbox in her purple velour lap, her bony knees hunched up to keep it from sliding to the floor. "Some pretty things in here. If I kept them out, a burglar might get them. No burglar's going hunting through an old lady's underthings, through a messy old closet." I was always looking to justify the mess in my room, too.

Mrs. Hill lifted the lid and handed it to me, the thick dust rippling slightly. "What about these, miss? You don't see these anymore."

She unwrapped eight long silver spoons with filigreed hearts at their tips. She handed them to me one by one and I ran my fingers over the thin silver lacework around the hearts' edges. She waved one stalk in the air.

"Spoons for iced tea. Plus the stems are hollow, so you can sip, too. Wedding present." Mrs. Hill closed her eyes. "Wedding present from Alva and Edna Thomas—he worked with Mr. Hill. Iced tea and strawberry shortcake in the summer. And brandy cup and lemon cake with burnt-sugar frosting at Christmas."

I had never seen anything so fancy and frivolous in all my life. My parents' house was all handsome, angular teak and tautly rounded leather, and each decorative piece had the added weight of culture or art or good taste. These spoons were just pretty and gay, and as I held them I could feel that if I pressed down any harder at all, the hollow stems would give way.

"Are you going to give them to your daughter?" I asked, sure that the Dr. Vivian Hill in the pastel-tinted eight-by-ten on the mantelpiece, with one manicured hand on the hood of a big white Mercedes, black eyes flatly daring us to wonder how she got from here to there, would not want the spoons, or anything else from this small house with the rutted floors and soiled lampshades. Vivian Hill's old bedroom was now the storage room—wire hangers, dresses from twenty years ago, shoes slit for corns and bunions and still not right, cat food for the cat that died six months before I came, Christmas-cookie tins filled with rubber bands and Green Stamps—and the only bit of Dr. Hill left was the graduation tassel used to pull down the window shade. Dr. Hill stayed at the Motor Inn when she visited.

Mrs. Hill made a feeble grab for the spoons, snatching at the air to my left. "Give them to Vivian? Why should I give them to anyone? I'm not dead. Gimme those spoons, girl."

I put all but one of the spoons back into her hands; they stuck out like silver pins in an old brown cushion. She sorted them and wrapped them in the tissue paper. Before she could count them up and accuse me, I handed her the last one.

"Don't forget this—it fell off your lap," I lied.

She gestured for the lid. "Next time, we can look at some more treasures," she said.

I put the red hatbox back and quickly lifted down the striped one. Inside were twelve silver spoons with short, thickly twisted stems, the ends crowned with tiny enamelled portraits of long-haired, Biblical-looking men. Each little white face was touched with two pink dots for cheeks and a pair of blue or brown dots for eyes. Their hair was several different shades of brown.

"Don't be goin' in my things, now," Mrs. Hill said.

"I'm not. I was just trying to get this put back where it belongs. I was tidying up your closet, as a matter of fact."

"Uh-huh. Snooping and spying is more like it."

I knew she didn't mind; it wasn't like there were millions of people interested in Mrs. Hill's life, never mind the contents of her closet.

After a few Saturdays, Mrs. Hill and I had gone through all three hatboxes. Besides the apostle spoons and the iced-tea stirrers, there were six half-size teacups and matching saucers, each with a different flower garlanding the sides of the cup and the face of the saucer, each with one coy bud resting at the bottom of the cup. I loved them all.

MRS. HILL had two cookbooks: "Joy of Cooking" and "The Paschal Lamb," which was put out by the Greater Galilee A.M.E. Zion Church of Philadelphia and was almost as long as the gravy-stained Rombauer bible. I read them both, and once Mrs. Hill showed me how to light her chipped gas stove I learned to cook. I baked five little casseroles every Saturday, so Mrs. Hill could just heat them up while I was gone, and even eat them cold without getting some kind of uncooked-meat disease.

In January, Mrs. Hill was always cold. She was tired of the hatboxes, tired of reading my palm, and tired of casserole. She would fall asleep when I got there and wake up as the sky was getting dark.

"Don't you leave while I'm sleeping. Elizabeth, you hear me? Don't you leave if I'm not awake."

"O.K. I mean, even if I did, you'd be fine. I mean, nothing would happen."

"Don't tell me what's gonna happen in my own house. You come and wake me up before you leave."

"Yes, ma'am."

The next Saturday, she fell asleep in her chair right after lunch. I went into her bedroom and stood in the mouth of the closet, staring up at the row of hatboxes. I took down the apostles and chose one whose eyes seemed to tilt up at me beneath lashes as dark and spiky as Seth Stern's. I put him into my backpack and changed Mrs. Hill's bed, trying to hold my breath until I got the clean sheets on and the old ones stuffed into the washer.

The following Saturday, I took one with blue eyes, and the Saturday after that another brown-eyed one. I wanted to take the lady's-slipper teacup next.

Mrs. Hill said to me, "Could you come this Tuesday? My Vivian's coming by, for just a little while. I think we could do a little cleaning up before."

"I can't. I've got school stuff. The newspaper. I have to go to the meeting." Mr. Stone was our adviser.

"I think you might have to skip that meeting, sugar. I don't like to put you out, you know that, but I really do need your help on Tuesday. Can't have my Dr. Fancy Pants shakin' her head, talkin' about putting Mrs. Hill in some *home*. I need you Tuesday."

If I came Tuesday, I would be there all the time. I could feel her need for me reaching out like terrible black roots, wrapping themselves right around me, burying me in wet brown earth.

"I'm really sorry. I just can't. I'm practically the person running the meeting. Maybe there's someone from church." Her church seemed to me to be overflowing with neatly dressed, gloved and hatted ladies eager to help.

"Have someone from church come in here? Don't talk crazy. You're the one I need. And I need you on Tuesday. It's not too much to ask, if you think on it."

I didn't say anything, hoping that

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she'd get embarrassed about being so insistent.

"Come here, sugar. It's not too much to ask since you've got three of my spoons. Three silver spoons and you won't come on Tuesday and help out your friend Mrs. Hill? I call that selfish. And stupid. I call that stupid. Steal from me and then make me mad. Don't you think I'm going to go right to Reverend Shales and tell him that nice little Jewish girl he found for me is stealing my silver? Don't you think I'm going to have to call your father and tell him that his daughter's a thief, taking advantage of a poor old lady, half blind and living all on her own?"

"Jesus," I said, keeping my voice low, so she wouldn't leap out of her recliner and attack me.

"Don't *you* call on Jesus." Her voice softened. "You can have the spoons. You can have a teacup, too. I can't get by with only Saturdays, and that's the truth." She leaned back in her chair, pressing her cheek into the ratty old doily she'd pinned to the headrest.

I went over to her, more ashamed that I had made her beg than about the stealing. I would make it up to her; I would walk in the pathways of righteousness every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday for the rest of her life.

ALL that year, even while I slept, my body kept changing, and when I woke up, flesh I had known my whole life had slid off or moved down or hidden itself under a blanket of thin dark hair. Boys looked at me carefully, smashed into me in the halls, but didn't speak. I didn't keep a little period calendar like some girls, so I ruined about twenty pairs of panties and carried extras in my schoolbag, and six tampons and Maybelline Peppermint Ice lipstick and a CornSilk compact. I looked in that little mirror constantly and covertly. I stole my mother's pink and aqua European gels, and Jolen bleach for the tops of my toes so that when I appeared on the Riviera Sean Connery would not be disgusted by the sight of my darkly hairy feet. I would not say it to anyone (who would I say it to, even if I'd been willing?), but I thought I had potential.

Mr. Stone said I did. He read poetry to our ninth-grade English class and told me I could show him my own poems during study hall. I sat in his office, our chair arms touching, and smelled his coffee and tobacco and his tart middle-aged-man smell. I watched him roll up his sleeves over his wide arms. He tapped a ridged fingernail over each line, circling a misplaced word, tapping twice at a nice phrase.

I wrote poems about loneliness and terrible fires in crowded tenement buildings and poets dying in the Russian snow.

Mr. Stone said, "I know you know about the loneliness, honey," and he crossed out every other line and made me put away all the poems set in places I'd never been. He let me eat lunch in his office. I brought him three boxes of blue pencils, and I asked him where he was from.

"South of here," he said.

MRS. HILL and I were working our way through "Pride and Prejudice" and the poetry of Mr. Paul Dunbar. I gave her a couple of manicures without hurting her too badly and hoped she wouldn't ask for a pedicure. One afternoon, I found her smiling in her sleep when I walked in, her feet, brown and yellow and bumpy as toads, soaking in warm water and chamomile leaves. I dried her feet and moisturized them and filed down her toenails and painted them Carnaby Crimson and did my own fingers.

Mr. Stone said, "Fancy nails," and he asked me if I would risk my manicure to do some filing for him. I told him I used Sally Hansen and it didn't chip.

I drank Mr. Stone's coffee and waited for someone to admire my red cowboy boots propped up on a pile of blue books. From behind his desk I could watch the entire junior high walk by, their faces passing between my pointy toes. When the bell rang I shut the door and read everyone's grades while I filed.

In that little office, with the frosted-glass window facing me and the view of the parking lot behind me, with the dirty metal file cabinets and the film of cigarette ash and dust and the apple cores rotting in Mr. Stone's wastebasket from Monday to Friday, I felt whole. The dreams other girls tried to make real with boys or clothes or horses were nothing to me. The best dream, the true red heart of my life, was Mr. Stone, Mrs. Hill was the ribbon, and books were the lace trim.

The only real ugliness was my parents' fighting. My father moved out and back and out again, handing me twenty dollars every time he came or went. I sat on Mr. Stone's linoleum floor, against the filing cabinet, and Mr. Stone crouched down beside me.

"Liz, what's the matter?"

"Nothing. I hate my life. Sometimes."

"I'm sorry," Mr. Stone said. "Every year, it'll get a little better. For at least the next ten years."

"Maybe, maybe not." I looked down at the toes of my boots.

"Maybe not," Mr. Stone agreed without smiling. Looking straight into his small blue eyes, I didn't see the crumpled skin around them and the way his brow hung over them and the deep dirty holes in his cheeks. When he looked at me, I looked away.

I loved him for kneeling beside me, his long legs folded up beneath him on the dirty floor, and even though I now felt not just better but great, fat tears ran down my face. Three drops fell on my notebook. I hoped he'd give me permission to skip class, I hoped my nose wasn't running, I hoped I wasn't ruining my mother's black silk T-shirt.

"Can you go to class? The bell's ringing."

"I guess. I don't know."

"All right, stay. I'll write you a pass

TIMING TYSON

This Saturday, at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Mike Tyson will take on Bruce Seldon, the World Boxing Association heavyweight champ, and Seldon promises to stay in the ring longer than the combined sixteen minutes fifty-one seconds clocked by the three men Tyson has faced since his release from prison last year. Seldon, who is known for his sharp left jab, says of his opponent, "Like a thoroughbred racehorse or a cheetah going after its prey, you know he's going to slow down eventually. When he slows down, I'll be there." His fellow-heavyweight Riddick (Big Daddy) Bowe is counting on Seldon's stamina. He has offered to bet Tyson, the current World Boxing Council titleholder, that he won't knock Seldon out in less than a minute forty-eight seconds—which is how long it took Bowe to prevail in his match against Seldon five years ago. Tyson has yet to respond to the challenge; Bowe, meanwhile, is preparing for his own heavyweight bout this Thursday at Madison Square Garden, against Andrew Golota.

Illustration by Gary Kelley

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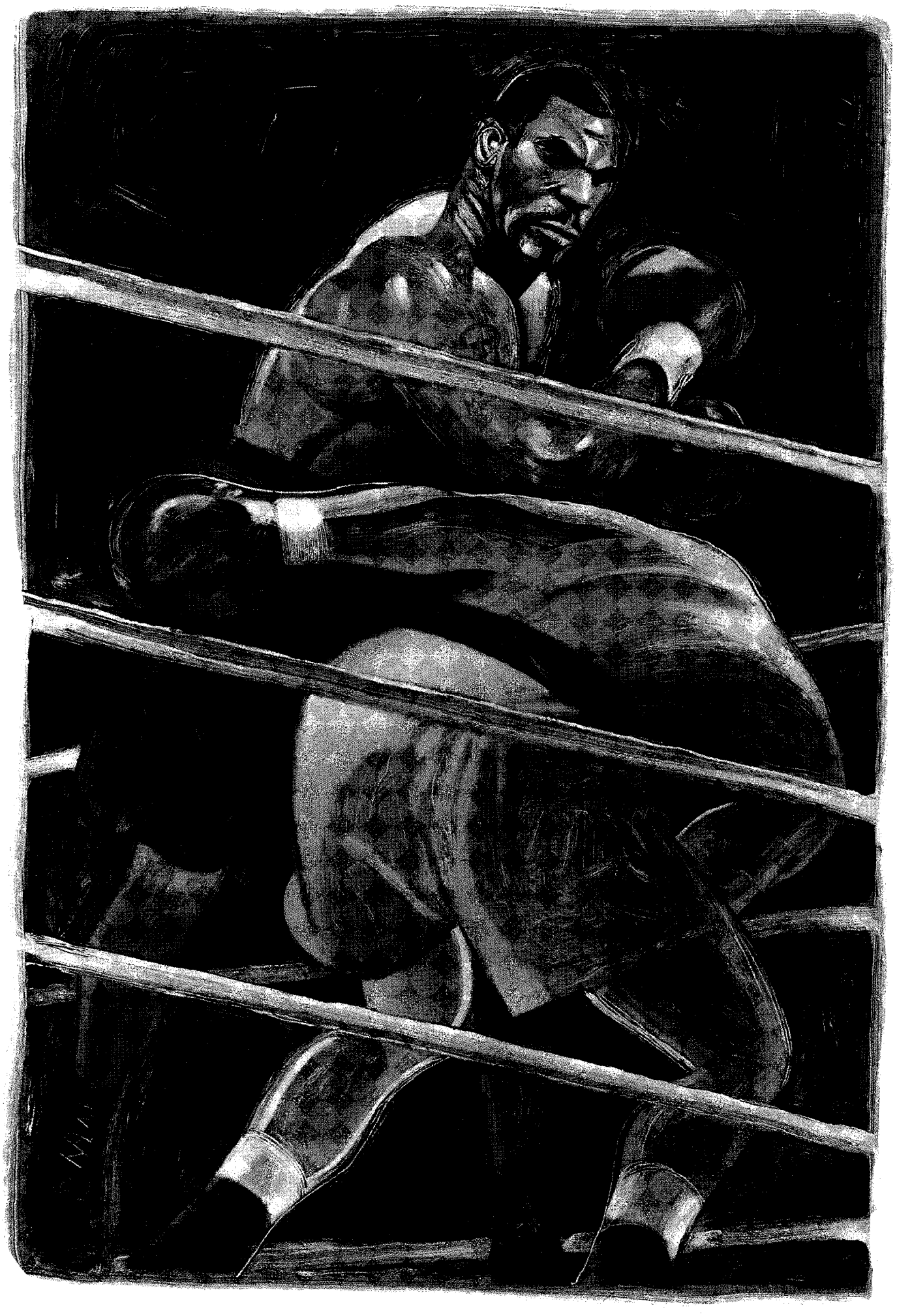

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"On the other hand, it's great to be out of Washington!"

• •

and you can go later. Whose class are you missing?"

"Extended Algebra. Mr. Provatella doesn't mind."

"Well, you can't get much more behind than you are, I guess. You're not going to be a mathematical genius, Miss Taube. You better cultivate your other talents." He poured some coffee out of his thermos. "I have to go teach. Sit right there and write me a sonnet. I'll give you a ride home if you want." He walked off quickly, a kind of fast, barrelly cowboy's walk.

I sighed and read his comments on Bobby Belnick's mythology paper. I rummaged in the desk for the chocolates he kept for me at the back of the bottom drawer. He loved me.

I TOLD Mrs. Hill, "Absolutely no more pork rinds."

"Do you see a doctor on the premises?"

"Come on, Mrs. Hill, it's not good for you." There was no other adult I could talk to like that. My mother never did anything that wasn't good for her, my father's arteries were of no interest to me, and Mr. Stone, who knew something about everything, made it clear that we could talk about me but not about him.

"Who dropped you off? I heard a car door." Mrs. Hill liked to think that her hearing was extra sharp to make up for her eyesight.

"Mr. Stone." Very proud.

"Who's that?"

"He's my English teacher this year."

"Why's he dropping you off here all the time?"

Mrs. Hill was always faintly accusatory. I shrugged, which I knew she couldn't see but would feel, and started peeling carrots.

"Elizabeth, am I talking to myself? Are you in some kind of trouble at school?"

"No, I'm not. I imagine he dropped me off here because I was going here." I spoke very slowly and clearly, to show her how stupid she was being.

"How old a man is this Mr. Who?"

"Mr. Stone. How should I know? Old. Do you want these carrots puréed or in circles, to go with peas or something?"

"He drives you around a lot?"

I sliced the carrots into inedible oversized chunks and went into her bedroom to gather up the laundry. She would just have to sit and wait. Her feet hurt too much for her to follow me around, pestering me.

"Has your mother met him? She has not. Your legs are getting long."

I shrugged again.

"You stopped wearing your glasses. How come?"

"Contacts." I loved my contacts. I loved the sharp world and I loved my eyes, edged in black eyeliner. I scratched my corneas twice because I couldn't bear to take the lenses out except to sleep.

Mr. Stone dropped me off there on Tuesdays and Thursdays. From then on, I tried to shut the car door softly, grabbing it with both hands to keep it from slamming, and as soon as I walked through the door Mrs. Hill would say, "Fool," as though she were speaking to someone else.

Charlotte Macklin was the school social worker, and if she had heard Mrs. Hill she would have felt better about me. She thought no one gave a damn that I spent all my study halls in Mr. Stone's office and was frequently seen getting into his car after school. Mrs. Macklin knew, even if no one else did, that although it did not violate any school rule, it undermined morale for students and teachers to see a ninth-grade girl sitting behind the desk of the English Department chairman, sipping coffee out of his thermos, showing her boot bottoms to the passing world.

Mrs. Hill said, "Please bring him by."

MR. STONE drove me almost every afternoon, and in the cocoon of his old Saab I inhaled the smoky air and held my breath, to make the trip seem longer. He lent me money to pick up a soda for Mrs. Hill, and watched me put on lip gloss in his visor mirror and

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smoothed down my bangs. Comic-book remnants and paper cups and empty cigarette packs covered my sneakers.

"You're growing up."

"Yeah. It happens," I said.

"Do you babysit, grownup?"

I had, but I was still scared to stay by myself at night. "Yes. I mean, not much," I said. "But I can."

Mr. Stone frowned. "O.K., maybe you'll babysit for us sometime."

He pushed my hair behind my ear, squinting at me through the smoke, and I thought that he would never ask me to babysit, that we would never take a long drive in the Saab, riding past darkened houses in the moonlight. But he would have if Mrs. Hill hadn't stuck her oar in.

At the second light, I said what Mrs. Hill wanted me to say.

"Mrs. Hill would like to meet you. She used to teach, I think."

"Really."

"She said she did. She wants you to come in."

Mr. Stone didn't answer that. I wore my low-riding bell-bottoms and my Mexican blouse with the lemons and oranges and red hearts swirling down the front of my breasts. I sat completely upright so my stomach wouldn't come close to my belt. He said, "Pretty blouse." He didn't look at me. He talked like a father, about his sons. Such good kids and exceptionally bright, which even my parents said about me. I told Mr. Stone I loved children, and he laughed.

He looked out the side window. "You know, I grew up in a place a lot like this. Mostly white, though. My God, look at those." He pointed to twin blue-shuttered houses with orderly twin gardens and bitty porches, each with two chairs and a small plastic table set with four tall pink glasses and matching pitchers. "You smell that? That's the smell of the South, right there. Mint, dirt, and cornstarch. Do you want me to come in now?"

"I think it would be nice." I led him in the kitchen door, describing our progress so Mrs. Hill wouldn't be surprised and pissy about it. "We're here, Mrs. Hill. I brought Mr. Stone, my English teacher. He thought he'd stop by and say hi."

Mr. Stone didn't look like he appreciated being shanghaied into the middle of Mrs. Hill's blue brocade living-room set. Mrs. Hill looked right at him, which was like turning her back.

"Welcome, Mr. Stone. Elizabeth's famous English teacher. Honey, why don't you make us some tea?"

I just stood there until Mrs. Hill flapped her hands a couple of times like I was a loose chicken, and then I backed out, watching Mr. Stone. He smiled at Mrs. Hill and flapped a hand, too. I listened on the other side of the kitchen door, which was so thin I could hear Mrs. Hill sighing and Mr. Stone sighing back.

"Could you come a little closer? My eyesight's not so good." Mrs. Hill's sweet-little-old-lady voice.

I heard him drag the ottoman over, which meant he was now sitting a good six inches below her, putting them face to face. Ear to face, since Mrs. Hill was probably trying to get him in her sights.

"You're not even a young-looking man," she said, and I heard Mr. Stone laugh.

"No, ma'am." He sounded different,

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Southern, not his classroom voice, not his smoking-in-the-car voice.

"Come a little closer," Mrs. Hill said. "South Carolina."

"Yes, ma'am. Kershaw. And you?"

"Mars, Alabama."

The tip of his nose had to be denting her puddingy cheek for them to be talking so quietly.

"All the way from Kershaw. My." For a minute I didn't hear anything. "And what do you want with my girl? You like girls in particular? Children?"

Mr. Stone breathed in fast. I wanted to rush in and hit her, and as she lay on the floor we would drive off to someplace pastel and foreign in our dark-red convertible.

"No, ma'am. I'm not like that. I don't prefer girls to women. I've got a wife at home. And three boys."

"Well, then," she said, and I thought, So there, and wondered how close they were now. I could just see a sliver of his shoe tips pointed toward the recliner.

"Well, then," he echoed. "I know it doesn't seem right. I could lie to you, that's what a reasonable man would do. A reasonable man, oh Jesus. I beg your pardon, ma'am."

I heard Mrs. Hill's wheezing and Mr. Stone's deep cough and the clock on the mantel.

"I don't do anything I shouldn't," he said.

"Except what you're thinking, and you won't stop that, will you?"

"Can't, not won't. How can I? I'm not leaving town, if that's what you mean. And that's what it would take, about three thousand miles. Could we throw in an ocean?"

Very softly, Mrs. Hill said, "We could throw in two oceans for all the good it'll do you, and you know we should, because there is no glory coming from this and this is not a conversation about forgiveness. I don't care how you end, that's your concern, or your poor wife's. You put one hand on that child, who thinks you love her fine mind, one hand, even when she's more grown, and I'll see you turning in Hell, listen to you pray for death. And don't think I won't know. That child tells me everything. So maybe you can keep your hands to yourself, and I won't have to think so badly of you. Mis-tuh Stone."

"Yes, ma'am. I don't want you to think badly of me, and I don't want to think badly of myself. I have no intention of harming her. You must see that whatever it looks like, it is love. And I have to say it is, in part, for her fine mind. I give you my word. Well, I don't have much else, under the circumstances. I would cut off my hand first."

It didn't sound as though it was so hard for him to give me up and just admire my mind for the rest of his life. He didn't sound so madly in love with me that it was scaring him and Mrs. Hill. He just sounded happy to be talking Southern, the two of them purring along, word endings gone to nothing, their voices loopier and wider and sweeter than when they talked to me.

I brought in the teacups, went back for the spoons, and had to go back a third time, for milk; Mr. Stone poured. Mrs. Hill told a couple of funny stories about the kids in her Sunday-school class, all of them now at least Mr. Stone's age, and Mr. Stone slapped his leg and laughed.

I walked him to the door, and he said my name and straightened my shirt collar. I lifted my shoulders to meet his fingers, and he dropped the little bit of shirt he'd been holding. Mrs. Hill said of course he should come by again, and he said of course he would hope to come again, without imposing on her hospitality, it would be a pleasure.

I closed the door behind him. She was already sighing and sucking her teeth, getting warmed up for something.

"That's your Mr. Stone."

"Yeah. You want turkey tetrazzini? You've got that three-bean salad from last weekend." I turned on the radio.

"All right. In a minute. Come in here, Elizabeth. Are you going to make me shout all night?"

"No, ma'am," I said, sighing at least as loudly as she had.

The ottoman was still warm, even damp, from when Mr. Stone sat on it and told her he loved me.

"He sure does like you. And you like him."

"He's O.K. He likes poetry."

THE ROSE

We waited for the roses to bloom.
They were your flower. Always, in my mind,
your face on the first day, a tightly folded rose.
But the roses were a month away.

There, on the lawn, you moved from isle
to lit isle, choosing the tulip, the daffodil,
the dandelion. You made no distinction.
Everything was yours for the taking,

the pale wisteria, a bloom off the dogwood,
diffuse and free and calm as a mind
that spends itself completely on its blossoming.
You forgot me. You left me behind,

stepping in and out of shadow, as if the grass
were water, the pooling light a stepping stone.
Quick-footed, sure, never for a moment
would you be lost in a rushing stream of years.

And then, hands full of flowers,
how easily you ran back to where I stood—
O, I stood in a place different from you—
and said, *These are for you . . .*

I stared at you over a great chasm of time
as, over and over, you brought me spring flowers.

—ELIZABETH SPIRES

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" 'Who is she that looketh forth as the morning / Fair as the moon / Clear as the sun / And terrible as an army with banners?' Like that?" Mrs. Hill said.

I didn't answer, just walked into the kitchen while she was reciting.

"You're in the room, you're out of the room, I know what I know. Were you eavesdropping?"

"I don't care what you know and I don't care what you said."

"Could I trouble you for a napkin?"

I put the napkin in her lap and cooked and washed up while she ate, which took forever.

"I'm going." The dishes would sit right there on her TV tray until Thursday.

"The plates, sugar?"

I slammed the door.

MR. STONE stopped waiting for me in the parking lot. When I went to his office, there were always other kids in it, kids who could hardly read at all, kids waiting to show him their poems or ask for advice or just sit around with him. I ate lunch behind the field house until school ended, and watched the first and second graders at recess and saw which girls sat by themselves near the monkey bars or the back steps.

Mrs. Hill called me into her bedroom one day and gave me the baby-pink rosebud cup and saucer to cheer me up.

My mother offered to send me anywhere for the summer—to sail in the Caribbean, to slop pigs and make jewelry in Vermont, to study architecture in Venice. I took a job at the library and boxed old magazines and stole old books and Mr. Stone didn't call me.

By August, Mrs. Hill's house was about a hundred degrees during the day. We had so many fans on we couldn't hear each other, which was fine with me. Every couple of days she'd point out some handsome guy on the soaps and say, "Now, that's a nice young man," as if the next step was for me to call CBS. I was bored stupid.

I changed boyfriends four times and played strip poker in Mimi Tedeschi's basement. I read Ezra Pound and "Story of O" and I read Georgette Heyer. I wanted to tell him about the boys and the books.

I smelled coffee and Barbasol in my sleep and I called him.

I said, It's me.

He said, I'll teach you how to drive. ♦

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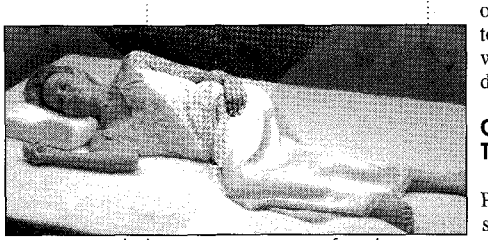

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CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Politicians and pundits argue that elaborate legal protections for the accused put justice in jeopardy. They have everything but evidence on their side.

BY SOL WACHTLER

"Is a society redeemed if it provides massive safeguards for accused persons . . . and yet fails to provide elementary protection for its law-abiding citizens?" So asked Chief Justice Warren Burger, of the United States Supreme Court, in a 1981 address to the American Bar Association. The question is one that is repeated today—not quite so artfully phrased—by public-office holders and seekers from both political parties. Indeed, there is an increasing consensus among Americans that those "massive safeguards" have grown beyond all reason, elevating the rights of criminals above those of their victims. "Public opinion's always in advance of the law," John Galsworthy said. If he was right, we can look forward to changes in the law which will make Chief Justice Burger's recommendations sound like an American Civil Liberties Union manifesto.

It's little wonder that the typical American seems convinced that the courts are to blame for the crime in the streets. In countless movies and TV shows, murderous villains are released "on a technicality." Somebody failed to read them their rights, or a crucial piece of evidence was suppressed on procedural grounds, or a lenient judge has bought their sob story and is letting them off with a slap on the wrist. And this picture of the courts as a place where the guilty hold sway is reinforced every day by politicians deploring soft-hearted and soft-headed judges who, we are told, care more about criminals than about their victims.

On the campaign trail, Dole and Clinton alike sometimes appear to be running against the judicial system: when a federal judge made a controversial ruling that excluded drug evidence, the two candidates, in chorus, called for his resignation or removal from the bench. Several bills are pending in Congress which would deprive judges of certain decision-making powers, particularly with respect to the operation of the exclusionary rule in federal courts. Both major Presidential candidates have endorsed a "victims' rights" amendment to the Constitution. Meanwhile, a call for rigid "mandatory sentencing" for violent crimes has assumed a place alongside calls for the restoration of the death penalty as a major plank in most political-campaign platforms.

Advocates of such "reforms" maintain that they are necessary to insure that the guilty are punished, their victims vindicated. The arguments are compelling, but are they right? As Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, I had the task of reviewing records of criminal trials where defendants alleged that they had been wronged by the courts; more often than not, I voted to uphold the conviction. Unlike my judicial colleagues, however, I have had the experience of being prosecuted and convicted, and I recently completed a prison sentence (for the crime of aggravated harassment). Defendants appealing their convictions were no longer simply names on a court docket; they were in the next cell. The experience has only confirmed my view of the criminal-justice system—that the system must work to punish the guilty without lessening the constitutional protections accorded all citizens. And it's still clear to me that the two objectives aren't genuinely in conflict. But this truth is easily lost amid the clamor for judicial crackdown. Increasingly, getting tough on crime seems to mean getting tough on judges.

Consider the current vogue for mandatory-sentencing laws. Nowhere has political interference in the work of the judiciary been felt more acutely or the presence of public opinion been more pervasive. Such laws have been enacted by Congress and by most states, and are regularly being ratcheted up. They have a shared rationale: We don't trust judges to be tough enough when it comes to meting out sentences, so we're going to mandate what sentences are given. To accomplish this, commissions were established in more than a dozen states—the federal version was the United States Sentencing Commission—and they determined categories of offenses and established the punishment range for each offense. The crime that the prosecutor chose to accuse the defendant of would dictate the punishment. No weight could be given to many of the factors that judges took into account when they still had discretion. For example, what is the age of the defendant? What was his mental condition at the time of the offense? Do his education, his position in the community, his employment and job training, and his personal history indicate that he can be rehabilitated, or will he continue to be a danger to society? The federal guidelines specifically exclude these factors from consideration in most cases. Instead, the judge simply applies a graded scale, adds up points (a job that has already been done by the prosecutor), and mechanically arrives at the sentence.

In "Sentencing Matters" (Oxford; $29.95), Michael Tonry, a law professor at the University of Minnesota, analyzes the effect that mandatory sentences have had on the justice system over the past four decades. His conclusion, based on exhaustive studies, is that "mandatory penalty laws shift power from judges to prosecutors, meet with widespread circumvention, produce dislocations in case processing, and too often result in imposition of penalties that everyone involved believes to be unduly harsh." His empirical data also demonstrate that mandatory penalties do not reduce crime—or, to put it more precisely, "have either no demonstrable marginal deterrent effects or short-term effects that rapidly waste away."

To let the name of the crime determine the sentence almost invites injustice. For instance, if there is a barroom brawl the victor may be guilty of the crime of assault. Under mandatory sentencing, his punishment may be the same as that for the marauder who beats up a frail elderly person. A young chain-snatcher can be

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found guilty of the same robbery charge as a sophisticated bank robber and, under mandated sentencing, receive the same sentence. A woman who steals powdered milk to feed her baby has committed the same crime—and may receive the same punishment—as a man who steals powdered milk to cut heroin.

As a judge, I had always opposed such mandatory-sentencing guidelines; I knew that many people in prison—particularly, first-time drug offenders—were serving terms four, five, and even ten times as long as those served by some rapists and murderers. Still, it is different and more unsettling when you see mandated sentences in terms of people instead of looking at them as an actuary looks at business reports. I met many predators behind bars who shouldn't be anywhere else. But I also met men like Danny Robinson (as I'll call him), who occupied a cell near mine in the federal prison in Rochester, Minnesota. He was black and thirty-two years old, and is serving a forty-year sentence. He is scheduled to be released when he is seventy years old.

Robinson, the youngest of eight children, was reared in a small apartment in the projects of Chicago's West Side. He held dozens of part-time jobs as he worked his way through high school and a year of college. His passion was skating, and he spent what little free time he had at the local skating rink. There Danny became friends with a man I'll call Johnny Jones. In early 1992, Jones moved to Houston, Texas, and invited Robinson to come down for the Fourth of July holidays to attend a rap concert. He went. Robinson was to return to Chicago in a few days, and Jones was scheduled to go with him. As Robinson tells it, his friend had a few last-minute matters to attend to, so he had a cousin take Robinson and the luggage to the train station; he would be along shortly. At the station, Robinson was accosted by F.B.I. agents. They opened both his bags and those which he claimed belonged to his friend Jones. Robinson's bags contained nothing illegal, but the others held more than thirty kilograms of cocaine and some fourteen thousand dollars in cash. "More money than I had ever seen before," Robinson told me later.

Robinson was charged with interstate trafficking in cocaine, and a jury found him guilty. I have no quarrel with this finding: I've heard stories like this before, and if I had been on the jury I would probably have voted for a conviction, too. But his sentence—forty years without possibility of parole—bordered on the uncivilized. What happened? Although it was his first offense, the amount of cocaine was substantial, and placed him in an extremely high category for sentencing-guideline purposes. He was then "enhanced"—that is, his sentence was increased—because in pleading "not guilty" he didn't coöperate with the prosecutor in naming names and identifying sources ("But that wasn't my stuff—how did I know who and where it came from?" he protested), didn't show remorse ("Why should I show remorse for something I didn't do?"), and obstructed justice by forcing the prosecutor to prove his guilt at trial. Inasmuch as he was found guilty, it must be presumed that he did traffic in cocaine and should have been punished for it. But how can we justify giving a first-time, nonviolent offender what is virtually a life sentence? Who really gains? You can be certain that even before Danny Robinson was sentenced another Danny Robinson was taking his place transporting drugs from Houston to Chicago.

The rights of suspects cannot be dismissed, writes Sol Wachtler, who has seen the law from both sides.

EUGÈNE MIHAESCO

The vogue for mandatory sentencing has had predictable results. As we are informed by the National Criminal Justice Commission, a project of the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, the country's prison population has quadrupled, from three hundred and thirty thousand in 1980 to more than a million two hundred thousand in 1996, with a rise to six million predicted by the year 2015. In its rate of incarceration, the United States leads the world, locking up more than five hundred people out of every hundred thousand. By contrast, England incarcerates fewer than a hundred people per hundred thousand, and Japan fewer than fifty. The cost of operating this nation's prisons is thirty billion dollars a year, and we can't seem to build them fast enough.

Because judges have been deprived of their sentencing discretion, the prosecutor, and not the judge, decides what the charge is, and thus determines what the punishment will be upon conviction. It's hardly surprising, then, that in a survey of federal judges who are obliged to apply federal sentencing guidelines respondents overwhelmingly criticized mandatory minimum sentences. Tonry concludes, "The quality of justice is impoverished when sentencing laws or guidelines, in the interest of treating like cases alike, make it difficult or impossible for judges to treat different cases differently." Unfortunately, as the saying goes, when the only tool you have is a hammer every problem looks like a nail.

EVEN as the prison population explodes, however, many people remain convinced that procedural scruples have disconnected crime and punishment. Judge Harold J. Rothwax

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has written a recent jeremiad along these lines called "Guilty: The Collapse of Criminal Justice" (Random House; $23), which depicts a criminal-justice system that is more intent on freeing the guilty on technicalities than it is on protecting society from their depredations. In his view, Miranda v. Arizona—the 1966 decision that required police officers to advise someone arrested for a crime that he has a right to counsel and the right to remain silent—is a prime example of the egregiously wrongheaded and destructive rights conferred on criminals. How are the police supposed to get a confession when they're required to advise criminals that they don't have to say a word? And what about confessions that are excluded because someone failed to read criminals their rights? Where's the justice in that?

The genesis of Miranda is the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution, which proclaims that the government may not compel a person "in any criminal case to be a witness against himself." The framers knew that it wasn't difficult to obtain a confession by the use of the rack or the thumbscrew, or by the threat of deportation. To prohibit this kind of abuse by government, the founders said, in effect, that a person could not be forced to confess. Even Judge Rothwax concedes that the confession in Brown v. Mississippi (1936), which was beaten out of a defendant with a metal-buckled leather strap, should not have been used to obtain a conviction. But what of subtler forms of coercing confession? What about the case of a defendant who is kept in isolation and questioned for three days without being allowed to see an attorney, or a defendant who is told that if he does not confess to a crime his ailing wife will be arrested and brought to the station house for questioning? What about threatening a mother by telling her that if she doesn't coöperate with the police her children will be taken away from her? The fact is that before the Miranda decision the methods of police interrogation were so diverse, and the effects of isolation, intimidation, and defendant ignorance so varied, that the appellate courts found it difficult to determine afterward whether a confession was truly voluntary.

The Miranda decision was an effort to put an end to this difficulty by establishing a universal standard that required all persons in police custody to be read their rights before being questioned. Under most circumstances, failure to comply with this rule would lead to a suppression of the confession. "Ridiculous," Rothwax says, and he's got plenty of company. Talk-show hosts and television cop shows have led people to believe that before the police may interrogate or arrest a suspect the "Miranda warnings" must be given. That just isn't the case. Neither arrest alone nor interrogation alone (if there has been no arrest) requires the warnings to be given. Miranda applies only to in-custody questioning; a statement made to the police by a suspect not in custody is not subject to Miranda.

In 1966, when Miranda was decided, I was a young lawyer who had served as a member of the military police and was currently serving as chairman of the Committee on Public Safety of the Nassau County Board of Supervisors. Law enforcement was very much a part of my life, and I, along with members of the county police force, members of the prosecutor's office, and others generally responsible for maintaining law and order, was frightened by the decision. We envisioned the use of Miranda by wily defense counsel as a tool for the suppression of confessions, and we all knew that confession was often the strongest foundation on which to build a conviction.

Over time, however, police compliance became second nature, and administering the warnings became a routine part of post-arrest interrogation. Today, judges are only very rarely obliged to suppress confessions because the warnings were not given, and acquittals on the basis of such a suppression are even rarer. Indeed, I would be hard pressed to name a single such case involving a capital crime, and Judge Rothwax cites none. When I was a judge, I concluded that Miranda presented no problems for law enforcement and did insure the Fifth Amendment protections against self-incrimination.

Now, having spent more than a year behind bars, with many prisoners who confessed or incriminated themselves despite having been read their Miranda rights, I'd go one step further. I've concluded that when an arresting officer reads from that small card in his hat or his pocket, telling a suspect in custody that he has the right to remain silent, that anything he says may be used in evidence against him, and so forth, the officer might as well be reading the batting order for the New York Mets.

They've all heard it before—on TV or when they were last arrested. The incantation is neither as meaningful as I thought it was when I served as an appellate judge nor as sinister as critics like Rothwax think it is. Ask an inmate who has incriminated himself why he did so, and the answer is predictable: there's the attempt to shift blame when an accomplice is involved; the attempt to dupe the "dumb cop"; the promise or hope of leniency; or just plain remorse or con-

HER CUP OF TEA

The artist Meret Oppenheim (1913-1985) is best known for "Le Déjeuner en Fourrure," the fur-covered cup, saucer, and spoon she made in 1936, and for her role during the same decade in Paris-based Surrealist circles—particularly in nude photographs taken by Man Ray. Eventually, Oppenheim chafed under the Surrealist label, but in "Beyond the Teacup," the exhibition of her work currently at the Guggenheim, which contains painting, sculpture, and diverse objects, the early pieces echo through the years. Her fancy for shoes, for example, first appears in a 1934 drawing, then evolves into a pair of ruffled high heels (1936) and then into an object called "The Couple" (1956), in which brown boots joined at the toes form a witty commentary on forced unions. The notorious spring banquet Oppenheim assembled in 1959 on the body of a nude woman is, not surprisingly, absent from the Guggenheim exhibition, but the catalogue features a picture taken at this occasion and photographs displaying the artist's own poise before the camera. The exhibition, organized by Independent Curators Incorporated, will travel to Chicago, Miami Beach, and Omaha after it closes in New York, on October 9th.

Meret Oppenheim, photographed by Nanda Lanfranco in the early nineteen-eighties.

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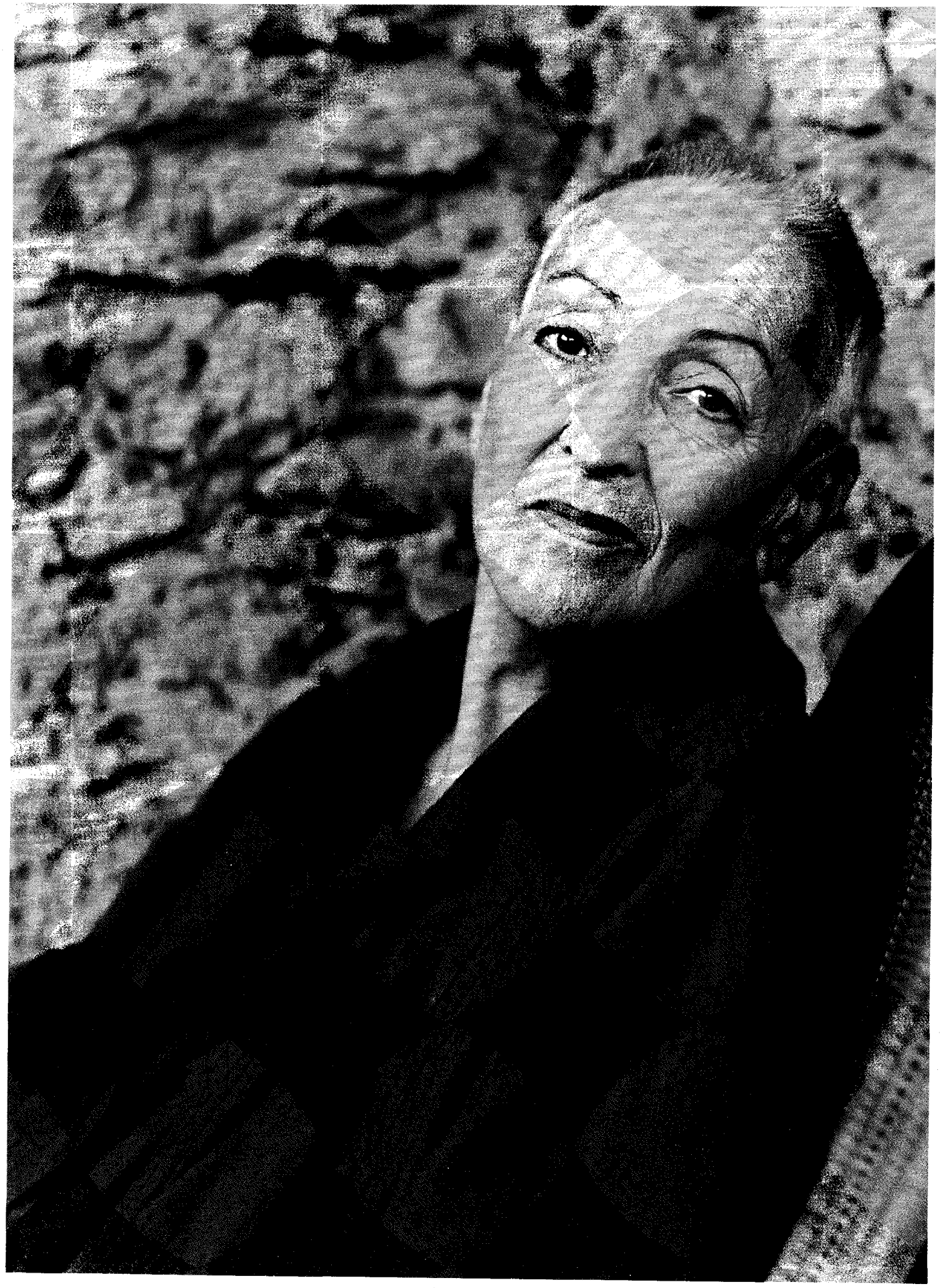

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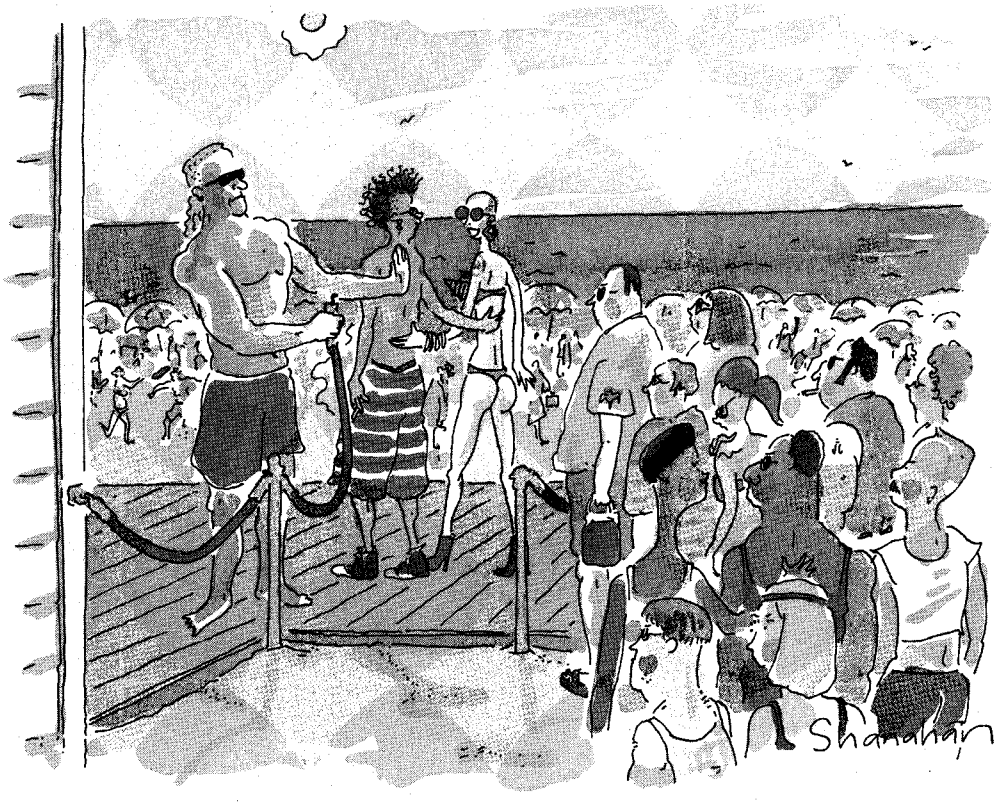
science—in short, pretty much the same reasons that have always been involved. So much for the great Miranda menace.

In far greater danger of extinction is the exclusionary rule, which directs courts to suppress illegally obtained evidence. In a famous 1926 opinion, Benjamin Cardozo, then a New York judge, captured the sense of outrage that the exclusionary rule can inspire when he complained, "The criminal goes free because the constable has blundered." These days, the lock-'em-up-and-throw-away-the-key demagogues fighting against the exclusionary rule have been joined by a considerable number of responsible judges, law-enforcement officers, and academics. In recent years, the Supreme Court, under the influence of Chief Justices Burger and Rehnquist, has embarked on a course to limit the scope and force of the exclusionary rule. Exceptions to the warrant requirements—based on the "good faith" of police officers, or on "exigency," or on the "totality of the circumstances," or on the "balancing of competing interests"—have greatly diminished the original thrust and practical sweep of the rule.

As an appellate judge for twenty years, I felt the frustrations of a court-fashioned rule's dictating that evidence secured by the police—evidence that can prove guilt—must be suppressed if the police violated the Fourth Amendment right of an accused against "unreasonable searches and seizures" to acquire it. In the elegant and lucid "Virtual Justice: The Flawed Prosecution of Crime in America" (Yale; $30), H. Richard Uviller, a Columbia law professor and a former prosecutor, writes of his own ambivalence with respect to the exclusionary rule: "I dearly wish for trials of the guilt of a defendant, not the transgressions of the pursuing officers. At the same time, I find it repugnant that courts should tolerate the use of illegal methods by police in the pursuit of those whom they believe to be criminals, even if it should turn out that they were right." It's a genuine dilemma, with serious considerations on both sides. And yet the critics of the exclusionary rule have tended to overstate their case. Thus Judge Rothwax, for example, insists that whenever the exclusionary rule is used "a criminal goes free—no matter how serious the crime or minor the police intrusion." Actually, on those rare occasions when the exclusionary rule results in the reversal of a conviction a new trial is invariably ordered—and the new trial, more often than not, results in another conviction. Even when the constable blunders, the criminal very seldom goes free.

Take one of Judge Rothwax's own examples—the case of Edward Coolidge, in which the United States Supreme Court reversed a murder conviction because evidence of the crime was obtained with an improperly issued warrant. "Although Coolidge's crime was a horrible one, the criminal went free because the constable blundered in the eyes of the U.S. Supreme Court," Judge Rothwax writes, and he adds, "The Coolidge reversal makes me ashamed." But Judge Rothwax fails to tell what happened next. The criminal did not go free. In a retrial, Coolidge was convicted of murder and received a sentence of twenty-five to forty years.

Just as typical was the case of a major drug dealer with whom I was imprisoned in Rochester. He told me that he had been indicted and convicted on thirty-five counts of possession, trafficking, and selling of cocaine, and had received a sentence of twenty years. His rights were violated by the F.B.I., he said, when agents broke into a lake cottage where he vacationed in the summer. (He apparently used it to store cocaine in the winter.) "No warrant," he told me. "They didn't even try to get one. Just busted down the door." If what he said was true, it seemed that he had a good chance for a reversal. And, sure enough, one afternoon he ran through the unit, leaping and shouting the news: an appellate court had reversed his conviction. The search was held illegal, the contraband seized in the cottage was suppressed, and thirty counts of the thirty-five-count indictment were dismissed. He was ecstatic—for a while. Last month, I was told, he was retried on the five remaining counts and convicted. Once again, he was sentenced to twenty years. This was, all around, a good result: the F.B.I. will be more careful about the Fourth Amendment next time; and the drug dealer is on his way back to prison.



If civil liberties have never been inconsistent with the aggressive and efficient prosecution of crime, neither can the rights of suspects be dismissed as some aberration of a left-leaning Warren Court. The Bill of Rights came into being because our founders had experienced the power of the crown in trammelling

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liberty. Four of the amendments in the Bill of Rights were designed to protect the prisoner in the dock—to make certain that the freedom granted the citizens of this new nation was not eclipsed by prosecutorial abuse.

Yet lately we have been enacting laws that virtually invite this abuse, by empowering the prosecutor to control the criminal-justice process from beginning (the grand jury) to end (sentencing under the mandated guidelines). Rothwax is typical of those who believe that the prosecutor must be given the upper hand over defense counsel. "In a court of law, only the prosecution is assigned the task of seeking the truth," he claims. Yet the fact is that defense attorneys, unlike prosecutors, have no inherent power over the system. And when the powers of prosecutors are expanded so are the possibilities of abuse.

A worrisome example is the way in which many federal prosecutors have been misusing conspiracy laws. These laws were designed primarily to ensnare the "kingpins" of drug operations. The kingpins rarely deal directly with the drugs—those are handled by lower-ranking participants. The idea was to arrest the small-time participant and then make a deal with him. He is promised leniency if he "gives up" his kingpin boss. The prosecutor can then make out a case of conspiracy in order to get to the kingpin. Proof of any contact that the kingpin maintained with the small-time participant, even at a distance from the everyday operations of the conspiracy, is enough for a conviction.

The trouble is that a United States Attorney generally has a very short shelf life. His service is usually coextensive with the term of the President of the United States and is often measured by his ambition to reach an office that affords more job security. For that reason, many United States Attorneys are determined to make a reputation as quickly as possible. They tend to allow their agendas to be shaped by the publicity that an arrest will bring—and the publicity is enhanced by the number of arrests the charges will bring.

In order to maximize the number of arrests, many prosecutors have stood the conspiracy laws on their head. When the kingpin is arrested or convicted, he is likely to turn in other members of the conspiracy in exchange for favorable treatment. The result is that those who work for him, or worked for him in the past, are the ones most severely punished; in that sense, the big bugs fly through the web and the little ones are caught. I was in prison with several drug dealers who worked for one of this nation's most powerful drug lords—Leroy (Nicky) Barnes. One of those dealers had been "given up," along with many other minor functionaries, by Barnes. Many of the people who worked with Barnes have been in federal prisons for more than ten years. Some will remain there for decades to come. Although Barnes himself is in prison, his sentence of life without parole was reduced after he coöperated with authorities; now a protected informant, he will be eligible for parole in two years. People often wonder why prisons are crowded with low-level pushers and "mules" (that is, delivery persons), while the kingpins seldom end up there. The answer lies in the misuse of the conspiracy laws.

A SOCIETY that lives in fear of crime behind triple-locked doors is an easy target for the political rhetoricians who suggest that diminishing constitutional protections will lead to safer streets. I suspect that ever since Miranda and the exclusionary rule became effective the public has believed that constitutional safeguards are freeing guilty criminals in droves. Nobody has told the public that confessions seem to be given as freely and readily now as they were before the Miranda decision, or that convictions, too, are still being obtained as they should be, with between ninety and ninety-five per cent of them guilty pleas. As Charles Silberman concluded in his book "Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice" (1978), "criminal courts generally do an effective job of separating the innocent from the guilty, most of those who should be convicted are convicted, and most of those who should be punished are punished." Worse still, the demagogic attacks on judges for being "soft on crime" pay scant heed to the tradition of an independent judiciary. A restless public is told that if judges were tougher on crime there would be less crime. But the fact is that the courts don't cause crime and the judges can't prevent crime. They are, as Judge David

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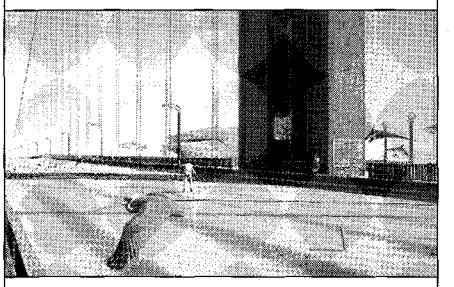

The Return of Jonah. Photo by Lee Fatherree.

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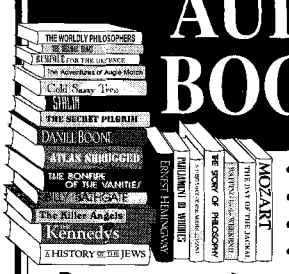

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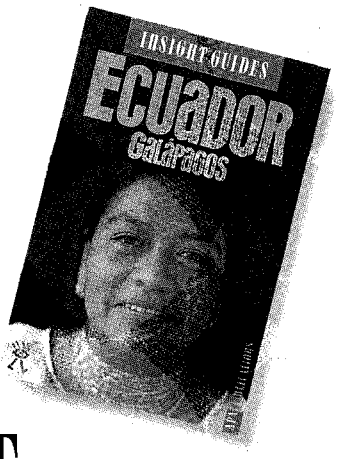

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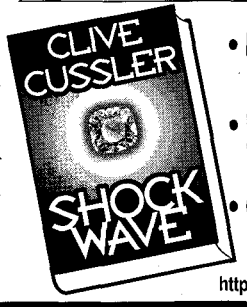

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Bazelon once said, like "janitors, tidying up the human and social wreckage." Similarly, it is a great mistake to regard the courts and the judges as quiet implementers or expediters of the prosecutor's office or of the position taken by the government. They are supposed to be the guardians of justice in our society in accordance with the law. If our judicial system has a single outstanding feature, it is its attempt to apply the law fairly and with an even hand—free from the passions of the moment and free from the passions of the crowd. Courts are not branch offices of the executive or of the legislature; they are a separate branch of the government.

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TRESPASSES

A novel of France, the Church, and the sins of the past.

BY MARY HAWTHORNE

BRIAN MOORE, like Graham Greene (whose early praise of Moore's novels can still be found stamped, like a Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval, onto their dust jackets), is foremost a Catholic writer—nowadays nearly an anachronism. Since the publication of his first novel, "Judith Hearne," in 1955, he has reflected on the difficulties of religious faith, on human suffering despite or because of it, and on the sometimes disturbing notion of a divine capacity for infinite mercy, whatever the trespass. His earlier books concern the plights of the troubled, the hapless, and the failed—those whose lives have somehow managed to slip through their fingers, often while they were tending the needs of others at the expense of their own—and their painful and always vain attempts to recover lost time and opportunity. Moore has held success to be a less interesting condition than failure. "Success changes people," he once said. "It makes them something they were not and dehumanizes them in a way, whereas failure leaves you with a more intense distillation of that self you are."

Brian Moore

In recent years, Moore has given himself over to writing what might be called moral thrillers—books involving murder, chase, and moral dilemma, in which the Catholic Church has figured prominently. In his most recent novel, "The Statement" (Dutton; $22.95), he finds inspiration in the celebrated affair of Paul Touvier, the Vichy *milicien* in charge of operations in the Rhône during the German Occupation. On receiving two postwar death sentences in absentia, for treason and for consorting with the enemy, Touvier went underground, and was given periodic shelter by the Church. Then, in 1971, in response to a vigorous campaign waged on his behalf by a secretary to Cardinal Gerlier, in Lyons, President Pompidou granted him a pardon, provoking a public outcry that forced him back into hiding. (Meanwhile, more highly positioned collaborationists, like Maurice Papon, who was responsible for the deportation of thousands of Jews to the death camps, held influential positions in government during the postwar years.) In 1973, Touvier was charged with crimes against humanity; two years ago, he was finally tried, convicted, and sentenced to life imprisonment. As the first (and probably the last) Frenchman to stand trial

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on such charges, he has become the emblem by default of a sordid period in French history which both the government and the Catholic Church have been loath to face squarely. In "The Statement" Moore uses this affair to weave his own engrossing and disturbing tale of conspiracy.

TOUVIER'S doppelgänger, Pierre Brossard, is a tired seventy-year-old man on the lam. A fugitive from justice for more than forty years, he now finds himself the target of a vigilante group seeking to avenge the execution of fourteen Jews which he ordered in 1944. We learn that his would-be assassins have been instructed to append a "statement" to his dead body from the "Committee for Justice for the Jewish Victims of Dombey"—a committee that neither Jewish Nazi hunters nor the national police have ever heard of. (The revelation of its true identity, at the end, is one of the book's several chilling surprises.) The statement reads, in part, "After forty-four years of delays, legal prevarications, and the complicity of the Catholic Church in hiding Brossard from justice, the dead are now avenged." Brossard is also being pursued by the gendarmerie, on behalf of the Justice Department, which wants to try him for his crimes in the hope that his Vichy superiors will, in turn, be forced to stand trial. Life is further complicated for Brossard by the Cardinal Primate, a liberal who is worried about growing negative publicity surrounding the Church; he has instructed the abbots who have sheltered Brossard in the past to deny him asylum. In frantic search of refuge, Brossard trundles through Provence from priory to priory in an old Peugeot, his three suitcases stowed in the trunk. One of them is filled with Nazi memorabilia, in which he does a small trade to supplement monthly checks he receives from an order of right-wing Catholic activists and from a mysterious governmental source funnelled through a retired police *commissaire* now living near Avignon. (Moore situates him in eerie anonymity, in a small pink stucco villa just outside the city's medieval walls, a block away from a huge Leclerc supermarket.) Over the years, Brossard has also found employment as a car thief, a police informer, and an ironer—of stacks of counterfeit banknotes, to give them the look and feel of the real thing.

Brossard loves France—or, rather, *la France profonde*, the mythic past of France reflected in the ballads of Charles Trenet, the Latin Mass, and *pan bagnat* sandwiches. (One of his greatest fears is that he might have to emigrate, like other Fascists, to "some *métèque* country" and be forced to eat bad food.) He also loves God—in the opportunistic way of a child—and is addicted to the ritual of confession and absolution. His confessor, Monsignor Le Moyne, who was responsible for obtaining his Presidential pardon nearly twenty years earlier, believes in Brossard's repentance—but his repentance of what, exactly? "*Ego te absolvo*," Brossard muses while driving along the autoroute to Béziers. "Am I really absolved, am I really cleansed, am I free to enter heaven? . . . My whole life has been an imposture. I'm lying, even when I think I'm telling the truth." Le Moyne, for his part, is himself a Vichy apologist and an anti-Semite, whose self-ordained mission has been to "save" Brossard from his "persecutors." ("We must forgive our enemies," the Monsignor says to himself, "especially the Jews.")

Not surprisingly, as we follow Brossard through the countryside we find these contortions of logic to be widespread, especially among the elder clergy, the most conservative of whom are direct philosophical descendants of Charles Maurras and his virulently anti-Semitic and xenophobic Action Française—a reminder that the anti-Semitism of the French was not just a passing virus that they caught from the Germans but one with deep cultural roots of its own. Dissent comes in the form of a childhood classmate of Brossard's named Father Joseph, who has become the almoner of one of the priories he visits, and has rejected the intolerance promulgated by the Church of their youth. He confronts Brossard, exposing the hypocrisy of his repentance. Yet when faced with the decision of whether to turn him in, as his conscience dictates, or to shield his order from scandal he opts for the latter. It is he who understands the larger interest of the Church (and, by extension, France) in Brossard's exculpation. For in forgiving him the Church forgives itself and, finally, absolves itself of the responsibility of excavating the truth of a disquieting past. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED

ACCORDION CRIMES, by E. Annie Proulx (Scribners; $25). Following successive owners of an accordion—from its creator, an Italian immigrant, who was lynched in Louisiana in 1891, to some fatherless black children living on the edge of a noxious landfill in 1991—this twelve-car pileup of a book brims with the sort of disasters you read about on the inside pages of the paper. Despite Proulx's virtuosity in evoking a multitude of ethnicities, often in language like verbal filigree, she shows not one character who is kind, or even particularly nice.

OMON RA, by Victor Pelevin; translated from the Russian by Andrew Bromfield (Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $21). Pelevin dedicates this slim, astringent novel to "the Heroes of the Soviet Cosmos," and deftly sets about turning both of those terms into a laughable and tragic paradox. For a boy cosmonaut named Omon Ra, becoming a "hero" involves pedalling an "automated" moonwalker, which in fact will require not only his foot power but, finally, his life. "That's the dialectic!" the Party flight controllers might say, but Omon doesn't need cheerleading; his grim fate leaves him weirdly detached, and, as his rocket burrows into the void of space, he engages in radio small talk about Pink Floyd's "Atom Heart Mother" album. Omon's adventure is like a rocket firing off its various stages—each incident is more jolting and propulsively absurd than the one before.

THE SECOND BATTLE OF NEW ORLEANS, by Liva Baker (HarperCollins; $32). Public-school integration in New Orleans has left behind a famous, or infamous, image: federal marshals escorting a six-year-old black girl to school through hordes of screaming, spitting, and egg-throwing white women. Here Baker tells just how and why that horrific scene came about. Her absorbing account begins more than a century ago, when New Orleans "black Creoles"—French-speaking descendants of racially mixed unions, many of whom could pass for white—began mounting legal challenges to segregation. It ends in the present, taking in on the way every variety of good and evil, courage and cowardice, and, without scanting nuance or complexity, it reads like a thriller.

CÉLESTINE: VOICES FROM A FRENCH VILLAGE, by Gillian Tindall (Holt; $25). This amazing, affecting book conveys the pathos of a region's history through the lives of its inhabitants. Tindall, who is English, owns a house in the hamlet of Chassignolles (George Sand country); there she discovered a packet of letters written to Célestine Chaumette, the local innkeeper's daughter, in the early eighteen-sixties, when writing was a new skill for many country people. For Tindall, this discovery opened a door to France's rural past. Starting from those letters, and drawing upon official documents, oral narratives, and her own encounters, she portrays the people of Chassignolles from the French Revolution to the present—an epoch of radical change and almost invisible continuity.

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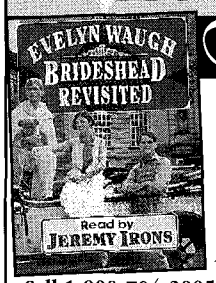

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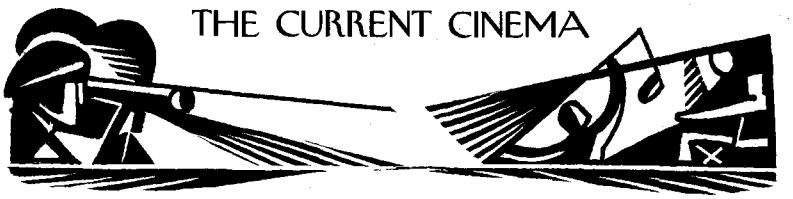

REBORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY

It's America 1, Aliens 0 in "Independence Day."

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

In Susan Sontag's 1965 essay "The Imagination of Disaster," a standard text in the aesthetics of schlock, she observes that one of the "primitive gratifications" of science-fiction films is "the depiction of urban disaster on a colossally magnified scale." This "Independence Day" delivers, and how. The latest (unacknowledged) remake of H. G. Wells's novel "The War of the Worlds," it razes more real estate and bowls more fireballs through tunnels than any alien-invasion movie ever. Mass hysteria has never looked more massive or hysterical. But it isn't the size of the blasts that "sells" the movie; it's the iconography of the targets. Instead of incapacitating countries by K.O.'ing hydroelectric dams or utility plants, this alien armada set on conquering Earth leaves the Statue of Liberty face down in the river, and the Empire State Building, which survived King Kong, is blown to bits. The trailer—probably the most successful trailer in movie history—featured what they call in porno the movie's "money shot": the White House itself exploding.

More than just a big summer movie, "Independence Day" is a mega meta-phenomenon—a pseudo event in which the audience prides itself on being part of the hype. You not only enjoy the movie, you enjoy yourself enjoying the movie, which is sprinkled with cute pop-cult references to "Top Gun," "Lawrence of Arabia," "The X-Files," "Alien," "2001: A Space Odyssey," "Dr. Strangelove," "E.T.," "Star Wars," and "Close Encounters of the Third Kind." What makes the movie "meta" is not only its self-awareness but the fact that it doesn't mean anything beyond itself. Other alien-invasion films tapped into nocturnal anxieties about nuclear doom ("The Day the Earth Stood Still"), soulless conformity ("Invasion of the Body Snatchers"), the bogeyman ("The Thing"). "Independence Day" has no subtext. It's all *uber*text.

Unlike so many current action films, this one isn't a frantic narrative jumble. It's structured like a classic three-act play, each day representing an act: July 2nd–arrival; July 3rd–aftermath; July 4th–counterattack. The first intimation that company's coming—a shadow crossing the stiff American flag planted on the moon—has a ceremonial majesty rare in this kind of expensive junk. And the flag is relevant. In the original "War of the Worlds," published in 1898, England was the battleground of the Martian attack. But this has been the American century, America is the only superpower now, and an attack on Earth becomes ipso facto an attack on the American way (our cars, our cheeseburgers). Americans take their heritage so much for granted that perhaps only a non-native can fake the fervor of defending the homeland. Born and raised in Germany, the film's director, Roland Emmerich, pictures America through the lens of an awe-struck tourist: postcard images of the Iwo Jima memorial and the Statue of Liberty depict an idealism so intact, a country bathed in such bountiful light, that the effect is ironic, enshrining, like Steven Spielberg's making the suburban tract in "E.T." look like the little town of Bethlehem. The spaceships first enter the earth's atmosphere in a Biblical cloud of fire, and a shadow creeps up the seated figure of Abraham Lincoln on his marble throne as darkness eclipses the skylines of New York, Los Angeles, etc. The spaceships themselves are city-size disks—cities poised above cities, with a strip of sky sandwiched between.

Meanwhile, the free world fidgets. As President Whitmore, Bill Pullman deploys a politician's smile so "sincere" that it seems to be hurting his fillings. Like

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Michael Douglas in "The American President," Pullman has neo-liberal hair and a lightweight demeanor. President Whitmore is clearly intended to be a Clintonesque figure—young, vital, empathetic, and dogged by leadership doubts. A fighter pilot in the Gulf War, Whitmore is accused of being a gutless wonder in office. When he addresses the nation, expressing the hope that these Darth Vader spheroids have come in peace, he doesn't invite them to the next G7 summit, but that's the general drift. Then, as he learns of their evil intentions, he urges a calm, orderly withdrawal from the cities (translation: *Run for your lives!*). Escaping from the burning capital on Air Force One, the President clenches his jaw. These goons from another galaxy have finally got on the fighting side of him. Forget the idea that the country is in flabby decline: the populist message of "Independence Day" is that America is still a scrappy, defiant, can-do country; the spirit of 1776 lies dormant in our collective genes. The President himself, proud, determined, and mourning his dead wife (Mary McDonnell) for what seems like all of two minutes, straps on a helmet and takes to the air to lead the freedom forces. There's no dramatic ploy too shameless for this movie to try.

Will Smith, Jeff Goldblum, and Bill Pullman: wisecracking and do-gooding in the face of extinction.

TAKESHI TADATSU

WHEN Sontag deplored the "moral simplification" of sci-fi films, she couldn't have anticipated how much hip flair a square format would accommodate in the postmodern era. "Independence Day," lingering over wedding bands and service uniforms, honoring duty, patriotism, and the power of prayer ("I haven't spoken to God since your mother died," one character apologizes), is so red-blooded and true-blue retro macho that it becomes a vague put-on, italicizing the attitudes it promotes until they seem unreal. Unreal, but not absurd: the movie makes it clear that, at crunch time, only do-gooders can get the job done. As in "Forrest Gump," where Boy Scout virtues took on a beatitude through Tom Hanks's carefully folded-in performance, the counterculture is portrayed here as a pagan tribe of silly, deluded deadbeats. With a spaceship hovering over Los Angeles, assorted hippies, U.F.O. buffs, and hedonists welcome the aliens by turning a high-rise rooftop into an open-air club and partying like it's 1999. When the bottom hatch of the ship begins to open, emitting blue light, the revellers cup their faces upward like the cosmic beholders in "Close Encounters"—only to be obliterated by the death ray. Foolish earthlings!

Every alien-invasion movie features a high-level conference of politicians, scientists, and military hotheads bickering over strategy as the news from outside grows ever grimmer. ("They've taken out Seattle, sir.") Here the role of scientist is assumed by Jeff Goldblum, reprising his geek elegance from "Jurassic Park" and "The Fly": he adjusts his glasses like a true thinker. As Goldblum's father, Judd Hirsch overplays as ripely as Goldblum underplays, shuffling across the screen like an old man making his way to the bathroom, and doing lovable-cranky, clogged-artery Jewish shtick. Military derring-do is exemplified by Will Smith, TV's "Fresh Prince," as a Marine fighter pilot who captures the first alien with a punch to the head (*thump:* "Welcome to Earth"). The brother has no fear. When Smith and Goldblum share a spacecraft on a near-suicide mission to the alien mother ship, wisecracking in the face of extinction, they show how the soldier and the scientist—and, more important, the black and the Jew—can bond; they're the Cornel West and Michael Lerner of extraterrestrial *tikkun*. (Also bucking for glory is Randy Quaid, making Popeye faces as an alien abductee looking for payback.)

Like so many productions, "Independence Day" has third-act problems. The pace drags. The dogfights between the tattered air force of the allies and the alien fighters become a confusing swarm of gnats. The movie, lacking any brainstorms of its own, mimics "War of the Worlds" to the very end. In Wells's novel, the Martians fall prey to infection, their immune systems laid waste by bacterial strains long assimilated by humankind but new to them; in "Independence Day," it's a *computer* virus that proves their undoing. The difference between these two wars of the worlds is in the emotional aftereffects. The narrator in Wells's novel staggers through a deathscape in which piles of Martians are beset by birds and dogs in a blackened pit. At the end of "Independence Day," millions are dead, entire cities are destroyed, spaceships smolder like downed zeppelins (nice shot of one banked behind the pyramids), nuclear detonations have released radioactive fallout—and the battered survivors stand around grinning as if they'd just won a volleyball game. They couldn't be more gee-whiz. There's no weight to what has happened—no hint of hard, scavenger times ahead. Only Hollywood in the nineties could arrange such a pain-free, upbeat Armageddon. ♦

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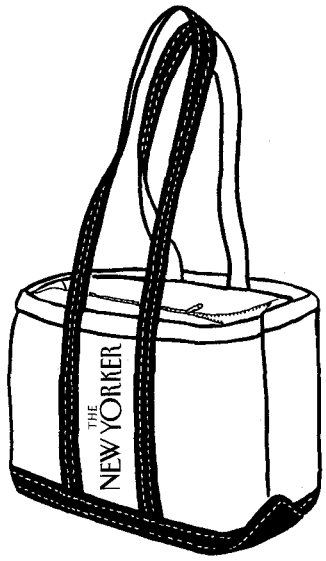

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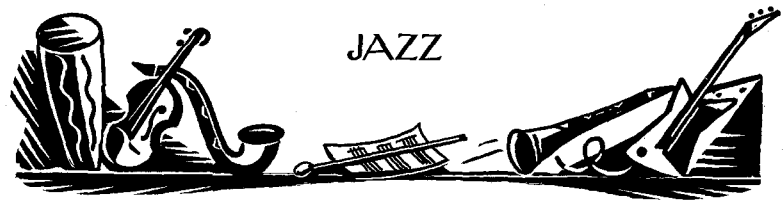

THE DEAN

Listening to Hank Jones.

BY WHITNEY BALLIETT

THE Jones Boys, as they were called in the fifties and sixties, included the pianist Hank Jones (born in 1918); the trumpeter, composer, and bandleader Thad Jones (born in 1923, died in 1986); and the drummer Elvin Jones (born in 1927). These three are, of course, brothers, who rank with the most gifted, adventurous, and persuasive of all jazz musicians. Thad was the co-founder of the bellwether Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Orchestra, a fine composer ("A Child Is Born"; lyrics by Alec Wilder), and a formidable trumpet player who never got his due. Elvin perfected an extraordinary polyrhythmic attack during his years with John Coltrane, and has become the most widely imitated modern drummer. And Hank, who has been a kind of one-man foundation under jazz during the past fifty years (a Jazz at the Philharmonic mainstay, an accompanist for Ella Fitzgerald, a CBS staff musician, the pianist on a thousand record dates), is widely regarded as the dean of jazz pianists. One winter, for a short, delirious time, George Shearing was ensconced in the Café Carlyle while Hank Jones was across the hall in the Bemelmans Bar. The minute his first show was over, Shearing, a dazzling pianist himself, would speed across the hall on the arm of his wife, Ellie, and station himself at Jones's right elbow, and remain until it was time to go back to work. "Hank has been my mentor since 1947," Shearing said recently.

Jones first came to New York in 1944, to join Hot Lips Page's band, on Fifty-second Street. He was entering a land of pianistic giants and near-giants. Art Tatum was God, and nearby were Nat Cole, Teddy Wilson, and Marlowe Morris; and just coming up were Bud Powell, Al Haig, Erroll Garner, and Thelonious Monk. Jones listened, appropriating a little of Tatum, a little of Wilson and Cole, and a little of Powell and Garner. The result is a quiet, lyrical, attentive style, so subtle and technically assured as to be almost self-effacing; you have to lean forward to catch Jones properly. He will start two choruses of the blues with delicate single notes, placing them in surprising, jarring places, either be-

"Concentration," Jones says, "is the difference between the great players and the players who are not great."

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hind the beat or off to one side—a path over a rocky place—and then play several dissonant chords; return to single notes, this time letting them pour in Tatum runs, some going up, some down; slip in more chords; and close the solo with a chime sound. Unlike most modern pianists, Jones constantly uses his left hand, issuing a carpet of tenths, little offbeat clusters, and occasional patches of stride. Jones's solos *think*, and they rest far above the florid, gothic roil that many jazz pianists have fallen into in the past twenty years.

Jones is a crisp, compact, serious man who laughs a lot and invariably wears a tie and jacket. He likes to talk about improvisation, and here are some of the things he said recently: "You have to stay in shape, so I do scales and exercises three or four hours a day, and then I practice sight-reading. Of course, there is an extremely important prelude to improvising. Every tune you play has its correct tempo, and you have to find it. When you do, it practically plays itself. It's not what *you* think it should be, it's what the tune demands. Improvisation is instant composing. You try and conceive the totality in your mind of what you're going to do, and then flesh it out with an F-minor seventh, or G-flat minor, or augmented fourth. You're superimposing another line on the original composition, and you think about the chord pattern—not each chord—and you think about the melody. Music is colorless, but there are shades of music—brightness, sombreness, any kind of mood. It's difficult not to repeat certain figures and patterns. When you do, it means your concentration is not what it should be. Concentration is the difference between the great players and the players who are not great. Other pianists have told me that once in a rare while they play on a level they have never reached before, and this makes me wonder if there is a level of the subconscious that improvisers suddenly tap into. I remember once I was working with Coleman Hawkins and J. J. Johnson and Max Roach, and I was late. They were already on the bandstand, and that must have shocked me, because I reached a level that I've only reached a few times since."

Jones spends as much time as he can on a farm he bought some years ago in upstate New York, but he still appears in New York, tours abroad, and makes at least one CD a year. In the past five years he has recorded two stunning trio albums—"Essence" (D.M.P.), with Ray Drummond on bass and Billy Higgins on drums, and "Hank Jones: Upon Reflection" (Gitane), with George Mraz on bass and Elvin Jones on drums. The second album contains ten Thad Jones songs, and is full of marvellous Hank Jones single-note lines and wild, whomping Elvin Jones brushwork. (Elvin is so strong that he once hugged Zoot Sims and broke two of his ribs.) Jones has also recently made two solo albums, "Hank Jones: Live at Maybeck Recital Hall" (Concord) and "Hank Jones: Handful of Keys" (Gitane), a celebration of Fats Waller, who occasionally passes through Jones's playing. (He had died just a year before Jones arrived in New York.) The Waller is rather noncommittal, but listen to the way Jones rebuilds "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning" and "Blue Monk" on the Maybeck Hall CD. Best of all, though, is Jones's recent "Steal Away: Charlie Haden and Hank Jones" (Verve).

Haden, the sometime avant-garde bassist, had heard Jones's majestic 1977 recording of "It's Me, O Lord" in the Smithsonian "Jazz Piano" box, and he asked Jones if he would be interested in recording an album of spirituals and hymns with him, and Jones said yes. There are seventeen tunes, among them "It's Me, O Lord," "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen," "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," "I've Got a Robe, You Got a Robe," "We Shall Overcome," and "Amazing Grace." The album, as quiet as God's thoughts, is unique and irresistibly affecting. The two men work as one, in unison or in harmony, and the recording becomes a subtle meditation on the horrors of slavery as well as a celebration of the great songs that came to be the slaves' solace. The album is also, I suspect, a celebration of Jones's parents, both of whom were seven-days-a-week churchgoers. (Jones still feels uneasy about performing on Sunday.) Most of the numbers are played straight but with the harmonic and rhythmic inflections that separate jazz from the rest of music. On "Wade in the Water" and "Go Down, Moses," however, Jones improvises delicately, and on "We Shall Overcome" he pauses after a unison statement of the melody, Haden begins to "walk," and Jones suddenly lifts into four ringing choruses of the blues, his single-note lines sparkling and his chords bell-like. It's an electric moment. ♦

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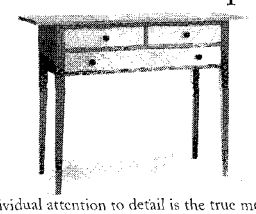

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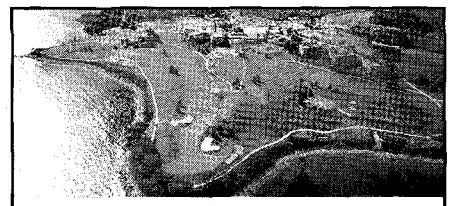

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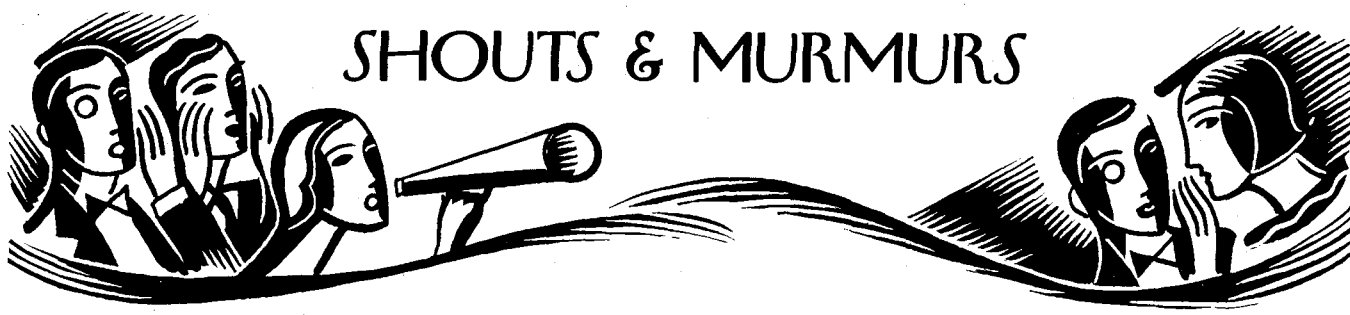


LIV ON THE CUSP

BY BRUCE McCALL

From MTV tartlet to art-house pastry du jour. No wonder the adoring critics who droolingly dub her "luminous" are so eager to gobble Liv Tyler up. You can almost sniff a just-from-the-oven freshness about her as she strides into the room.—*USA Today.*

THAT's Mel Gibson holding on line two. Calling about shared billing. Begging. Liv, what's happening to you is like undoing the cap and peeling that silvery foil lid thing off a brand-new bottle of Tylenol. No, I'm not going to pick up just now for Miss Jodie Foster, either. Why? I'll tell you why. Because I want you to witness something, Liv. Which is? *Belief* is not enough. Belief in talent comes a dime a dozen out here. One word: *concentration.* Little Miss Jodie has to wait because I'm concentrating on *you*, and if I were to have the honor of being your representation I would gladly dismantle this agency I've built. To *concentrate. On. You.*

Liv, optimism is the opiate of this town. Take a walk with me on the dark side. L.A. only looks flat. It's a pit. It cannot be allowed that your representation should choose badly and you stumble into the pit. Leave the Sandra Bullock parts to Sandra Bullock—and, by the way, name me one athletic-type lady star who's lasted. The road to ruin is paved with jogging suits, Liv. Has your current representation mentioned that? Kate Moss plus Marlene Dietrich plus a billion candlepower equals Liv, Liv. Drive the *groove*, not the track. Newman told me that. We see "The Blue Angel" next. Think of it as a down payment on an Oscar, which shortcuts your ascent by, oh, rule of thumb, four films, five even, which— But I talk too much. You were about to say?

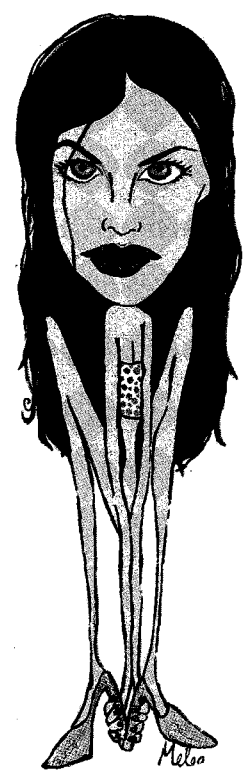
I'll be honest. I have not seen "Stealing Beauty." No need. You have this town lit up like Chernobyl. You always will. I've been around long enough to not even try explaining the whys of it. Why Demi, and not Shelley Long? Why Barbra, and not Candice? Why does the sun rise? Are you into Zen?

I digress. Stop me if your current representation has taken you through this already, but I doubt it. Movies don't make stars, Liv, the media does. Marshall McLuhan told me that once when he was staying at my guest cottage. So go on, choose your vehicle yourself—you and your astrologer. What we're all about is focussing the prism, pure and simple. Even if you don't choose us for representation, I beg of you: Golden Globes, the E! Channel, the Macy's Thanksgiving parade. Be there for the people, Liv, and the people will be there for you.

How do you feed an attack dog, Miss Tyler? Sparingly. The public is an attack dog. It wants to munch you up. After the next commitment, disappear. Go black for a year. Then, Miss Tyler, a comedy. No star of the first rank ever did *not* do an early comedy. Mamet will come after you. Nichols will be hollandaising your ego, trying to get you to do that thing from "Stealing Beauty"—that thing with your mouth everyone is talking about.

Let me explain something. Our representation is tolerant representation. My partner—you'll meet him at lunch—is a Nazi. I heil the guy. Scientology? Not a problem. Boyfriend a Freeman? We're packing just as much heat as he is. Because at the end of the day, Liv, we never forget this: there's not just a commission, there's a living, breathing, suffering, spiritual individual in there. We *are* our clients. So let us do what we call a soul audit. No touching, just a day or two of staring. Then we become you. And then it becomes the power of *us.*

Right now, you're quicksilver, young lady. But, funny thing about mercury, bobble it once and it's just a squirmy little blob on the floor. You're what, Liv, eighteen, nineteen? What you do not do is everything. Do not marry a director. Do not market workout tapes. Cher's constituency is not your constituency. Theatre is a month in Topeka, Miss Tyler, careerwise. Moviegoers aren't theatregoers, and vice versa. Am I clear? Want to end up like Farrah, in TV movies? You are not Courtney Love. You are Liv. Memorize this and hold it in your heart forever: class trickles down, trash claws up.



You're already too big for Taran-goddam-tino. Let somebody else gild that lily. Like I said—"The Blue Angel." Hackman, Branagh, Irons as the professor. Your choice. What you have to ask of your present representation, Liv, is what dimension they're honestly in. We have a Five Year Plan. They never mentioned a Five Year Plan? Well, Liv, there you go. ♦

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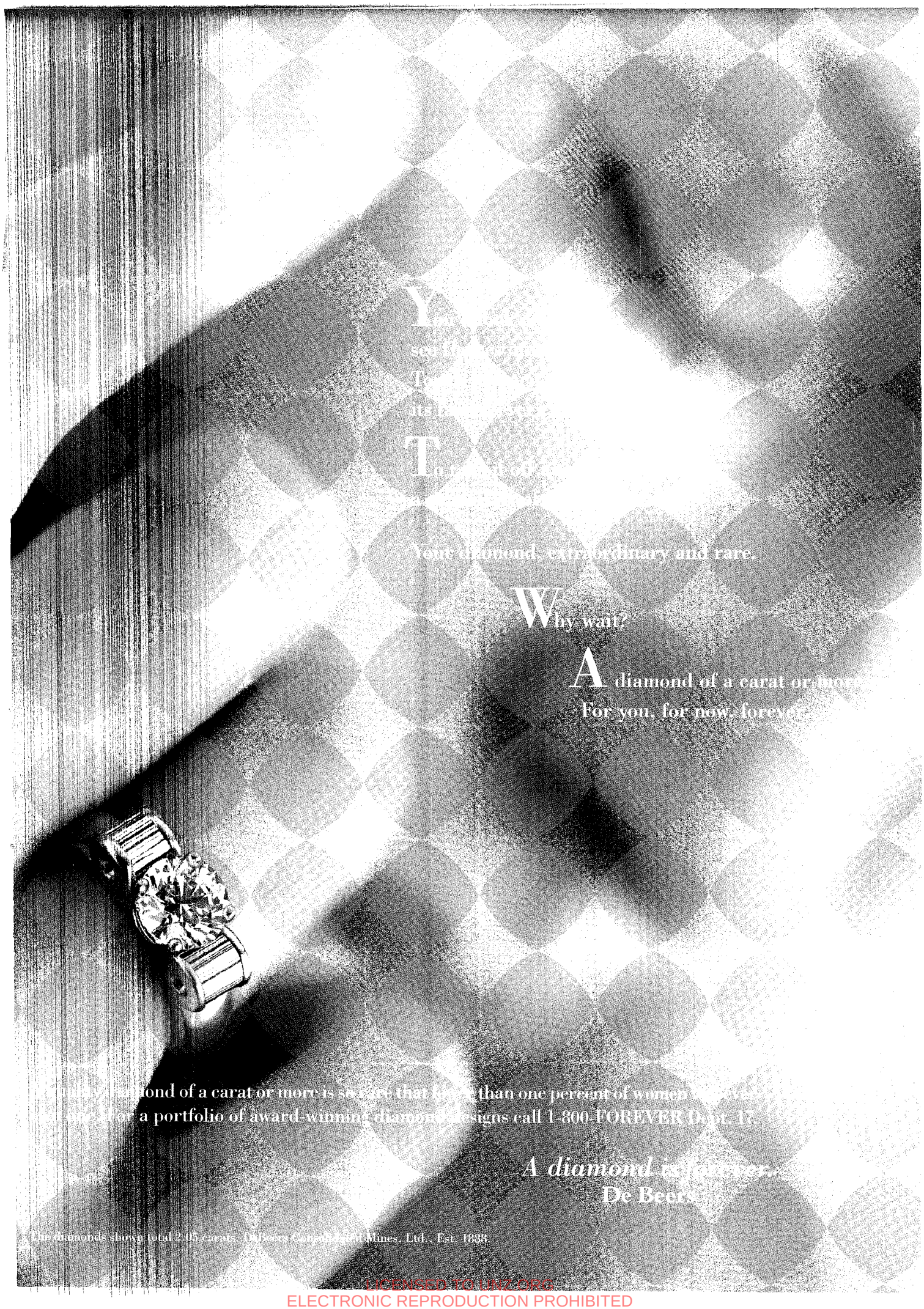

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